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ABSTRACT

Composed by English teachers at the elementary, secondary, and college levels, this book describes practical methods for teaching writing. Part one contains essays on issues related to teaching writing, such as motivation, evaluation, and teaching sequence. Part two describes more than 100 practical lessons for classroom use, each of which includes a statement about rationale and objectives for the lesson lists of suggested procedures for students and for the teacher, and recommendations for evaluation. The classroom lessons are categorized into three groups: those appropriate for grades four through six, seven through nine, and ten through twelve. (CC)

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# WRITING IN THE WILD YOUNG SPRING

## TEACHING COMPOSITION, 4-12

Compiled
and
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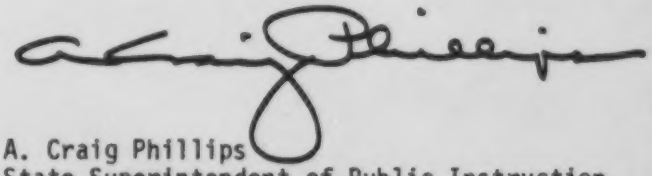
## FOREWORD

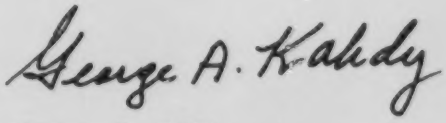
Writing is the other half of literacy. With our continuing and critical emphasis on improving reading instruction in the schools of North Carolina, we have never forgotten that writing is equally important. This book testifies to our concern for writing instruction. It contains statements which clarify quite lucidly all that is involved in learning to write. But--what is most attractive to me--it contains very practical suggestions by teachers all across the state for making the art of learning to write well an exciting enterprise for kids.



A. Craig Phillips
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

## PREFACE

Writing in the Wild Young Spring is the latest effort by the Division of Languages to provide teachers with practical methods and materials for teaching English/Language Arts--in this case, composition. Action Learning, an earlier publication, was a more generalized methods book produced as a follow-up to the Communications Section of the Department's Course of Study for Elementary and Secondary Schools, K-12. This book focuses exclusively upon how to do a better job in teaching writing. Thanks to contributions by teachers at all levels--college, secondary, and elementary--it has the potential for making every teacher a better teacher of writing.



George A. Kahdy
Assistant State Superintendent of
Public Instruction

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# INTRODUCTION

## Background

This book about the theory and practice of teaching writing grew out of a summer institute held on the campus of Mars Hill College and sponsored by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction in June of 1977. Forty master teachers of English/Language Arts from grades 4-12 were identified by consultants in the State Department's Division of Languages and by supervisors from the state's 145 local education agencies. The forty teachers were invited to the week-long institute to receive instruction in teaching the writing process and to prepare writing lessons for use in their own classes, as well as for subsequent distribution to other English/Language Arts teachers.

During the first two and a half days, the teachers heard Frank O'Hare (Chairperson, Department of English, University of Southern Mississippi), Bob Shuman (Professor of English, University of Illinois), Bob Reising (Professor of English-Education, Pembroke State University), and Sam Watson (Director of Freshman Composition, University of North Carolina-Charlotte) discuss such topics as sentence combining, sequence in the composition program, theories of both classical and modern rhetoric and alternative methods of evaluating student writing.

Following the intense instructional days, the teachers began to develop writing lessons on each of the following topics: Motivating Writing; Creative Writing; Writing Reports, Reviews, Arguments, and Descriptions; and Writing for Varieties of Audiences. In addition, teachers of grades 10-12 were asked to develop lessons on Writing the Research Paper. The teachers prepared their lessons in identical formats to achieve consistency and ease of use by others who might wish to employ the lessons in their own classrooms.

## Rationale

What follows is the result of long labor by all those involved in the summer institute. Part I of the book is composed of essays on topics and issues related to teaching writing. Part II contains selected writing lessons prepared by the participating teachers. Together, the two parts should provide daily, concrete help to those who wish to do a better job in teaching students how to write well.

Some key principles run throughout the essays and writing lessons contained in these pages:

(1) Perhaps the most important principle of all is that writing must be experience-based. Students must be led to see that living is the source of all writing. Certainly, writing can be based on reading; however, learning to think of writing as an interpretation of or a record of experience is a concept which gets little attention in many classrooms.

(2) Another principle is that a proper model for teaching writing must be informed by ways in which professional writers work. The key element here is revision. In a very real sense, writing is revision, as Don Murray suggests in his contribution to these materials.

(3) A third essential principle is that purposes for writing must be reality-based. That is to say, students must be led to write for eyes other than those of the teacher. Writing done solely for the teacher reduces the composing process to a mere exercise, which never communicates the message to students that writing has a high practical value, particularly in a world that uses telephones and televisions to send and receive so much information.

(4) A final principle is that evaluation of student writing must be selective. When will we grade students as composers? As editors? As both? And what should represent a student's final grade as a writer--a composite average of marks earned over a term, or an assessment of where the student is at the end? If evaluation is to be an instructional component, the teacher must select only a few qualitative aspects of student writing. (Perhaps these "principles" are really biases, but they do represent some of the convictions and points of view which highlight the content of this book.)

## About the Title

The title we have chosen is Writing in the Wild Young Spring, inspired primarily by a superb article bearing the same title which appeared in North Carolina Education (February, 1967), written by Clyde T. McCants, then of Gaston Community College. The title captures much of the spirit of the institute itself--where forty teachers met in the mountains at a time of seasonal rebirth to concentrate quietly but intently on ways to get the most out of the sometimes "wild young" people they teach. The title also says much more, as Shelley suggests in Adonais:

> Grief made the young spring
> wild, and she threw down
> Her kindling buds, as if she
> Autumn were,
> Or they dead leaves. . . .

Effectively teaching students in their "wild young spring(s)" means treating them as "kindling buds" and not as "dead leaves." Following the lessons developed by teachers in this book, and adhering to the advice and admonitions offered in the four accompanying essays, can help teachers deal with students as flowers rather than as weeds. If we expect to get good writing in our classes, we must require more of it. And we must lead students to see writing as an important enterprise. Further, we must not mislead our

students. We must stop preaching about how much fun writing is. It's hard work. It's the most sophisticated form of human communication. Finally, we should write more ourselves--and even share our efforts with our students. If we do all this, then the seeds we plant in kids' "wild young spring(s)" can germinate and grow into healthy, mature flowers. The extended metaphor drawn here is the real message of this book.

Acknowledgements

The Division of Languages gratefully acknowledges the contributions of many who made this volume possible. Particularly, we are grateful to Ms. Kay Bullock and staff in the Division of Public Information, as well as to Ms. Carolyn Matthews and Ms. Janet Mangum, who prepared the typescript. We appreciate the cooperation of Dr. A. Craig Phillips, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dr. Jerome Melton, Deputy State Superintendent, and Mr. George Kahdy, Assistant State Superintendent for Program Services, who encouraged us and facilitated the publication of this material. Finally, we extend gratitute to the State Board of Education, under whose auspices the work was done.

Denny T. Wolfe, Jr., Director
Division of Languages
N. C. Department of Public Instruction

# OUR STUDENTS WILL WRITE--IF WE LET THEM*

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Durham, New Hampshire

Our students want to write--but not what we want them to write.

Our students want to write of death and love and hate and fear and loyalty and disloyalty; they want to write the themes of literature in those forms--poetry, narrative, drama--which have survived the centuries. They want to write literature, and we assign them papers of literary analysis, comparison and contrast, argumentation based on subjects on which they are not informed and for which they have no concern.

English teachers may believe in the writing crisis, but writing teachers know that even in a multi-media electronic, passive spectator age everyone seems to want to write. The history teacher, the chemistry teacher, the coach, even fellow English teachers are closet writers. Principals, superintendents, schoolboard members, taxpayers are likely to press, shyly but firmly, a bulky manuscript into the writing teacher's hand. Others may be surprised that when the Russian poet, Joseph Brodsky, was being questioned by the KGB, his interrogator submitted his own manuscripts for Brodsky's criticism. Writing teachers aren't surprised.

Research supports the impression that everyone wants to write. Carol Chomsky, and others, have shown that children want to write before they want to read. Donald Graves' research indicates that the less writing assigned, the more produced. At the University of New Hampshire we continue to offer more and more sections of writing courses, and we cannot satisfy the demand. Kenneth Koch is doing exciting work in nursing homes with writers who are 70, 80, 90, 100 years old. The hunger to write survives as long as the breath to live.

Workshops on the teaching of writing should begin with the teachers writing. I run many such workshops, and the teachers write as their students should on subjects of their own choice in forms appropriate to the evolving subject. They never choose literary analysis, argumentation, or any of the forms usually called expository. They write description and narration, embryonic poems and stories. They are astonished and impressed at what they write and at what their colleagues write. Writing in a hurry, on demand, under impossible conditions, they produce moving and exciting writing which deals with the major themes of loss and birth and discovery and failure and survival. Their voices are vigorous, sad, angry, nostalgic, amused, diverse and individual.

*Reprinted from North Carolina English Teacher (Fall, 1977) by permission of both the author and editor.

These are the same voices I hear from Grade Three through post-doctoral students, but I didn't see the full import of what I observed until Richard Barbieri, head of the English Department at Milton Academy, told me a student of his charged that they had to write essays of literary analysis while they read poetry and fiction, "because you don't want our reading to be boring, you just want our writing to be boring."

We all know that the essay can be exciting, but we also know that the essay topics assigned in class to test knowledge of literature rarely produce exciting or even interesting writing.

I have begun to realize I must reconsider the new emphasis on expository writing in our schools, especially with beginning students, and reconsider our attitude towards creative writing. That is a term I hate. All writers I know resent it. The connotation of creative writing is frivolous writing, decorative writing, writing that is all style and no content, writing that is superficial, avocational, sometimes therapeutic, most times trivial.

Unfortunately, we can all point to creative writing classes in which there is more therapy than writing, a patronizing approval of all efforts, an irresponsible lack of standards. These "like wow, man, that's like real, I mean, wow" creative therapy units have turned many of us away from a proper examination of what happens when creative writing classes are taught by professional writing teachers.

In those classes the students and teacher alike examine, through writing, the most important issues in their lives, and they do it through the forms we call literary--poetry, fiction, drama, non-fiction.

As English teachers we should all be delighted that creative writing courses are popular and accept the people who teach them as equals in our profession. We usually, however, do not. We do not trust writers, although we admire their work when they are dead. We do not believe that our students are capable of attempting literature.

We should see that their desire to write proves the vitality and importance of literature and literature-making in each generation, that language is central to the human experience, not just as a communications skill but as the best way to recall and understand experience. We tell our students the unexamined life is not worth living, yet we seldom allow those students to examine their lives first-hand through what is termed creative writing.

It is time that we, as a profession, not only support the reading of literature but the making of literature; that we encourage our students to write what they want to write and realize that what they want to write is more intellectually demanding, more linguistically challenging, more rhetorically difficult than the writing we usually require in the English class.

The biggest problem in the teaching of writing is ourselves. We do not encourage, allow, or respond to our students' desire to write. We do not believe that our students can write anything worth reading, and they prove our prediction. Conditions will not improve until we realize that what we face is a teacher problem, not a student problem.

When I was in Junior High School the public address system announced that piano lessons would be available, and interested students should report to the cafeteria. We had a piano at home, and I had been fascinated by it, but no one in the family could even play chopsticks, and I was not allowed to touch it. I reported to the cafeteria for piano lessons. They cost 25¢ a week in those days of the Depression, but I could earn that after school. At last I would be able to make music.

I didn't know that there was a new method of teaching piano. When I reported for my first lesson there was a single piano on the stage, and 50 of us ($12.50 worth) assigned to separate places at the cafeteria tables. We were each given our own cardboard keyboard, which we unfolded on command. The teacher played on the stage and we drummed our fingers against the cardboard keyboard in awkward imitation.

We were told this new method had been developed by experts. We were commanded to shut any pianos we had at home and lock them. We would learn to play before we were allowed to play. Week after week I drummed my fingers against my cardboard keyboard, but I could hear no music. Then I missed one day of practice, and then another, one lesson and then another. I still do not play the piano.

I fear that the teaching of writing in our schools has similiarities, and the back-to-the-basics emphasis on expository writing, on workbooks, on rhetorical models, on sentence combining, forces our students to play cardboard keyboards. They can not hear their voices any more than I could hear music from the silent exercises I was forced to practice; they are not allowed to use their own language to discover their own meaning in their own existence.

There are many important reasons to consider taking what is usually tolerated, at best, in the elective creative writing course and placing it at the center of the writing curriculum. Some of them are:

- Writing about individual human experience motivates both the gifted and those we often consider disadvantaged. In fact, we may find that the disadvantaged aren't in terms of experiences which can be explored through writing. Students who are not motivated by our lectures on the need for writing skills--they know the need does not exist in the lives they expect to live--still share the human hunger to record and examine experience. Students who are bored with papers of literary analysis or even incapable of writing such a paper at this stage in their development may be able to write extraordinary papers based on first-person experience.

- Students discover, through creative writing, that they have a voice, they have a way of looking at their own life through their own language. They discover and learn to respect their own individuality.

- Creative writing extends experience and orders it. Through writing, the student increases his or her awareness of the world, and then works to order that awareness.

- As students follow language towards meaning they extend and stretch their linguistic skills.

- The experience-centered, doing nature of the writing curriculum will reach many students who are not comfortable with the analytical, passive-receptive nature of the typical academic curriculum.

- Students, through writing, discover the satisfaction of making. They think writing is an art and discover it is a craft.

- Creative writing gives students a new insight to literature. The study of literature is no longer entirely a spectator sport, but an activity which they can experience and appreciate.

- The creative writing class may be the place where some students learn to read. Test results in many community colleges and other colleges of the second chance show that many students who test as not being able to read are also the best writers. They are able to read their own words and to perform the complex, evaluative techniques essential to revision. They learn to read by writing.

- Students and teachers of creative writing rediscover the fun of writing. Art is, at the center, play, and perhaps that is the reason it is so little tolerated in the school. If it is fun can it be learning? Yes.

- Finally, we should teach creative writing because it is more intellectually demanding than the study of literature or language as they are usually taught in the English class. This runs directly counter to the stereotype believed by most English teachers. It is easier to complete a workbook on grammar, easier to tell the teacher what the teacher wants to know about a story than it is to use language to make meaning out of experience. The writing course is a thinking course, and it should be central to the curriculum in any school.

If we face up to this responsibility to get back to the real basics in writing and allow our students the opportunity to use language meaningfully to explore experience, then we must face the feeling of inadequacy

shared by almost all English teachers. We teach language and literature because that is what we have been trained to teach. We do not teach writing because few English teachers have ever had a course in writing or in the methods of teaching writing.

Fortunately the teaching of writing is within the reach of every English teacher. The teacher can teach himself or herself to teach writing by attempting an experimental curriculum based on three simple principles:

1. *Teach process not product.* The traditional English class appropriately deals with a product--finished writing. The writing class deals with unfinished writing, writing that is in the process of discovering meaning. Students must have the time to pass through the same stages of prewriting, writing, rewriting and editing which writers have to pass through to achieve the products we examine in other parts of the English curriculum.

   Classes in which we give assignments and grade first drafts produce the kind of writing we deplore. We must allow students to find their own subjects, using their own language to discover meaning in experience.

2. *Write Yourself.* The writing teacher prepares for the writing class by using his or her own language to examine and share experience. The teacher understands the writing process because the teacher experiences it.

3. *Listen to your students.* The center of the writing course is the conference in which the student evaluates the draft and the teacher responds to that evaluation. Students who are experiencing the process understand it better than we can. They know what is going well, what isn't going well, and they can, with our coaching, see how to improve their writing--to move closer to their meaning.

It sounds simple, and it is. It takes an act of courage and an act of faith. We have to commit ourselves to letting our students take the initiative in the writing course. Their writing is the text of the course, and we have to respond to that. To do so we have to have the courage to wait and, possibly, to fail. At the same time we have to have faith that our students have something to say, that they have a language and a life, and that their language and their life can work against each other to ignite meaning.

It is significant that these acts of course and faith correspond directly to the acts of courage and faith demanded of each writer, student or professional, when he or she faces a new draft. We have to have the courage to commit ourselves to the page, to reveal ourselves, to fail. And we have to have faith that the act of commitment and revelation may be worthwhile, may produce meaning.

If we have this courage and this faith we will discover that our students can write, and that they will write, and that we will be eager to read what they have written. There will be no writing crises in our classroom. There will be the excitement of students finding voices and the voices producing writing which is memorable and meaningful. Our students will write--if we let them.

# PAWNS AND PRO'S IN COMPOSITION

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## Being Pawns

Composition is the subject teachers do not learn; they are merely expected to teach it. That sentiment, paraphrased from Francis Christiansen,[1] presumes that there are things to be learned about composition. Increasingly, this presumption is a solid one, as teachers and other scholars rediscover a tradition of rhetorical theory and pedagogy as old as Western civilization itself, share important findings in contemporary rhetorical theory, literary theory, psycholinguistics, cognitive psychology and other disciplines,[2] and learn new questions to ask of their students' writing processes and their own classroom practices.

But a further presumption is that, by and large, teachers have not been offered what could be there to be learned. The pattern is a familiar one: As a university freshman, the prospective teacher takes composition (or, being "good in English" perhaps exempts it). Then she (still too rarely "he") works through the core of the English curriculum--a series of courses in British and American literary history. She takes a few courses in general education, and maybe an upper-level course in composition or grammar is thrown in. On the graduate level, the pattern repeats itself. Presumably one learns to write--and to teach writing--by writing a few papers in non-writing courses. And writing is writing papers of literary criticism. And writing instruction consists of papers assiduously and devotedly red-marked by professors whose major training and interests understandably lie somewhere else. That is not what the State Department guidelines imply should happen, but unfortunately this brief sketch is more fact than fable.

What might one do in composition? Even if our work as students has not posed that question, our own composition classes--at whatever level--force it upon us, often in Monday-morning desperation or Friday-night, theme-reading despair. It is easy to become locked into a vicious circle: an overworked teacher, insecure in her efforts to do what she was not trained to do, feels herself a failure. Cynicism about student abilities

(or pervious teachers' performance) can insulate her against despair, or she can develop a grim determination in her classes that well may be self-defeating: helplessness, more extensive red marks, and guilt can become arcs in the vicious circle as the teacher grasps for anything and discovers only the obvious errors in students' writing. That teacher may embrace outmoded teaching practices that seem responsible but are ineffective or worse; she is subject to passing fads and gimmickry, and she is extraordinarily vulnerable to pressures from school administrators, parents, the press and the public. If she is a high school teacher, perhaps the sharpest irony comes when her old university professors receive her students and blame her for not doing what they have not prepared her for doing, because they are unprepared themselves. Through no one's particular fault, many teachers are hardly initiated into composition as a serious discipline. Not knowing the field, they have little perspective from which to make fruitful instructional decisions. Because they are not in a position to ask authoritative questions in the field they teach, they can easily become pawns in their own classroom.

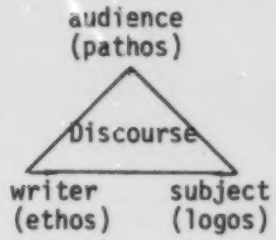
What might one do in composition? There are no easy answers or quick solutions. But there are promising possibilities, as the ideas and exercises in this book admirably illustrate. We could learn to ask the question jointly, calmly, and seriously. Ideas and research now available to be read and questions now available to be asked could make a lasting difference in our confidence as teachers and our students' performance as composers. We could become authorities in the field we teach.

This article is no more than an essay in that direction. I will illustrate some of the resources, ideas (and speculations) that can be available to us, and I will note a beginning step our state University System is taking in that direction. I hope to whet your interest, so that you will seek out further findings and ideas, through university coursework that will probably be developed only if you ask for it, through workshops, and through other resources.

## The Oldest Basics Around

As a pedagogically effective and theoretically serious discipline, composition (or "rhetoric," as it has characteristically been called) grew up with Western civilization itself, training citizens to develop verbal abilities in ways the newly-founded democracies demanded. This is not the place to trace that rich history,[3] to show how rhetoric became (and remained, until recently) the foundation for all liberal arts education,[4] or to consider whether classical rhetoric is or is not adequate for current educational needs.[5] Instead, I want briefly to summarize some central points which remained remarkably stable through the long history of classical theory. How many of these points are usually ignored in current composition pedagogy? By what have they been replaced? Consider those questions tacitly present in this discussion.

What means are available to the writer (or speaker) who would reach a particular audience? Some, of course, are inherent in the subject being discussed, but others come from the writer's knowledge of his audience's beliefs and values. Still others are inherent in the ways the writer can present himself effectively to that audience. Diagrammatically, these sources shaped the rhetorical (or communication) triangle:




Ethos, logos, pathos--all provide sources from which the writer must draw, if he/she is to reach a particular audience on some point of genuine significance.

Classical rhetoric, tied more closely to speaking than to writing, recognized three distinct types of speech situations. These too can be neatly summarized:

| Situation | place | time | end |
|---|---|---|---|
| Judicial | law court | past | accusation/defense |
| Deliberative | assembly | future | exhortation/dissuasion |
| Epideictic | rituals | present | praise/blame |

Notice that these speeches occur in quite different situations, reach quite different audiences, refer to events in quite different temporal relationships, and have quite different purposes. Implicitly, there is no such thing as the one perfect speech, ideal for all occasions independent of situation, audience, time, and purpose.

Central to classical theory are five constituent arts. The speaker must invent (we would say "discover") materials to be used, he/she must select and arrange them, he/she must embody them in an effective style of language. Since he/she is speaking without notes, he/she must develop memory of the speech, and he/she must deliver it effectively. As teachers of writing, we are concerned with the first three arts; for these (and for the other two) the classical teacher was informed by a systematic discipline.

For example, a student would not be told simply to write "about" some subject. Instead, under invention the student would learn systematic ways to discover the central question at issue. Through other techniques he/she would learn to retrieve material pertinent to the question and to discover new material.[6]

Under arrangement the student was taught that he/she must put the audience in a frame of mind to listen to the speech (exordium), must reconstruct the context (narration) giving rise to the question, must project for the audience the major points to be made (division), must give arguments (proof), must answer or anticipate objections (refutation) and must drive the arguments home (peroration). These were not formulae for parts that any speech must have; instead, they were attempts to help students adapt discourse purposefully to the needs of real audiences.

Finally, under style there is nothing in classical doctrine to imply that some one type of language is "correct" and all others are always "incorrect." Instead, the speaker adapted a high, middle, or low style that was appropriate to the occasion, audience, purpose, and the section of a speech.

Classical theory is remarkable, in part, for the emphases it refuses to provide. It refuses to focus exclusively on the finished speech (or paper) at the expense of the rich situations in which discourse is generated. There is no such thing, in classical theory, as the finished 500-word, five-paragraph theme, whose formal nicety guarantees good grades or effective discourse. They were informed by a coherent body of theory, but they knew that teaching the theory would not produce good speakers or writers. Instead, their theoretical grounding gave them a place to stand, enabling them to make intelligent pedagogical decisions and to develop work that would exercise students profitably in the various processes that inform ineffective communications. The European Renaissance itself was in considerable part a rebirth of the learning I have schematized,[7] yet today this body of theory and precept lies largely untaught and unknown to teachers who have inherited the classical rhetoricians' tasks.

## Panic or Progress in Writing Exercises

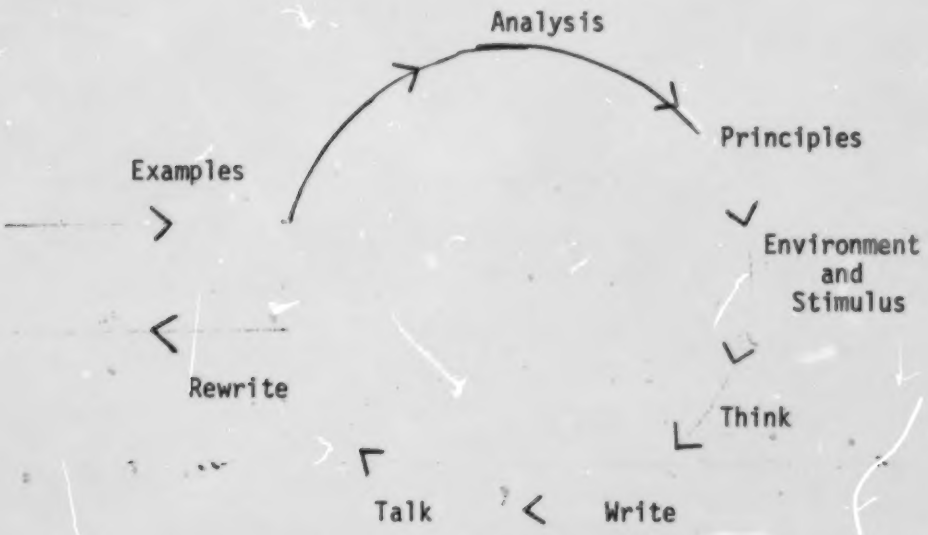
Contrary to a popular conception, perhaps the most important phase of a composition course is the planning that goes into individual assignments and sequences the teacher will ask students to address. Of course, the teacher can decide to make no formal assignments at all, instead letting writing situations emerge from classroom discussion and other activities. Properly prepared, that can be a responsible decision indeed.

But I suspect we have all experienced a contrary dilemma. Faced with a class the next day (or the next hour), we know we want students to write something; we dash off an assignment which we hope more than expect will allow them to write something intelligent and instructive. And we are often disappointed by what comes back.[8]

Perhaps the most general moral is to invest time in developing assignments. Writing an assignment's directions is in effect an assignment in writing: we can fruitfully ask ourselves why some assignments reached our audience of students and others did not. Often, subtle changes in our

directions will produce tremendous differences in the ways students respond, and it is worth working at an assignment's form and language so that it may be more effective next year.

Assignments of course can take many forms; there is no reason that they all have to be made the same way or that they all should produce "finished" pieces of writing. James Kinneavy schematizes kinds of activities that can inform assignments:[9]




A particular assignment can proceed from any point on Kinneavy's circle to any subsequent point. It is possible to go directly from "examples" to "write" for example, or from "think" to "write." The circle is useful in helping the teacher identify options. For brevity, in much of what follows I will be proceeding from "Environment and Stimulus" (i.e., the writing assignment) to "write," but without implying that there is any need to restrict to this sequence alone or that there is any special virtue in such a restriction.

Perhaps all writing assignments are artificial in some respects. After all, in the "real world" writing is usually not in response to a formal assignment. Even when a writing assignment seeks to capture a "real-world" situation (e.g. "Write a letter to the Editor"), the classroom setting itself constructs some artificial constraints.

Artificiality need not be a problem; it involves "art," after all. But a teacher needs to consider in what respect(s) an assignment is artificial, for what purpose(s), and with what likely effects. Without careful thought, a necessarily artificial assignment can become unintentionally incoherent as well. For example, there may be a conflict between

the attitude the student is asked to assume and the attitude implicit in the assignment itself: "Be imaginative" is an admirable hope, but it is hardly imaginative language. Incoherence can exist between the intent specified in an assignment and the means stipulated to reach it: "Write a paper of classification persuading young children that they should brush their teeth regularly," an assignment I just thought up, has many problems, among them that the two different instructions may seem coherent to the teacher but likely will not to the student. For that matter, "Write an essay of classification" is an exercise in artificiality. It may be useful, but outside of English classes has anyone ever sat down intending to write an essay in classification, pure and simple?

Finally, and frequently, the assignment's directions, stated or implied, can clash with the teacher's comments and grading criteria, as the student perceives them.[10] Here, too, the teacher really is a writer, trying to reach a real audience with a real purpose. Students, like other people, are incredibly sensitive to any differences between what one says he/she means and what the student later reads him/her to have meant. One gross (but true) example: the student who was told to express herself in a poem and then was graded down because her poem included the pronoun "I." I believe the cynicism and indifference we have seen in some students' faces can be traced to this sort of incoherence.

Nothing can guarantee an assignment's effectiveness; these questions, none of which have unequivocal "right answers," may help avoid some pitfalls: What sort(s) of cues does the assignment give? Recalling the classical triangle, for example, does it specify audience, or subject, or the sort of role the writer is asked to play? Does it specify a form? How strongly are the cues given? Is the assignment written in the same mode as the response it seeks? Can it plausibly engage the writer? (For example, would the teacher herself be willing to write a response?) Can appropriate responses plausibly engage the intended readers (the teacher herself and, hopefully, other students in the class)? Does the assignment leave room for effective surprises, or does the specter of "one right answer" lurk behind its directives? Finally, does the assignment imply a distinctive set of evaluative criteria peculiar to itself? "Write a personal letter" will not engender the same sorts of writing as "write an article for the school paper convincing students how they and their parents can conserve energy." Probably, evaluative comments that are broad enough to cover both sorts of writing are so vague that students will not understand them. "Be clear" is a remarkably murky exhortation, once you think about it, and can there be any suggestion less specific than "Be specific"?

In sum, a thoughtful assignment could include a statement of objective(s), indicating what students could be expected to learn from responding to it; a stimulus, to be given to students, involving them in

some situation calling for writing; a rationale, sketching the relationships between stimulus, students, and objectives; and a rubric, giving criteria for evaluating responses or categories describing crucial features in responses. In light of actual responses, the teacher will be able to adjust and refine these various elements, in the process learning a great deal about her students, her expectations, and her own writing.

Allow me final speculation about exercises. Sequencing of writing assignments is a matter of wide and fruitful debate, but notice that any sequencing assumes that not all writing is alike and that various sorts of writing can be arranged in a rough sort of developmental progression. That is not to say that some sorts of writing are inherently "better" or "more important" than others, just that some sorts of writing may build on skills that other sorts develop.

As a teacher, I find it tremendously helpful to have in mind a rough matrix that "places" various issues and complexities.[11] Mine runs pretty much as follows: imagine a graph; where the vertical and horizontal axes meet, place the "I" of the writer, who always though in varying ways is at the center of what he writes. Then, going up the vertical axis, place something like the following: "Express myself to someone," "Narrate something to someone," "describe. . . ," "explain. . . ," "analyze. . . ," "persuade someone of something." Along the horizontal axis note various "distances"--of time, place, and attitude--that may separate the "I" writing from subject and audience. The resulting "graph" raises a number of interesting questions and possibilities: Effectively to persuade someone of something, for example, should the writer already be able to explain that same "something" to the same "someone"? Should he/she learn to work with subjects, audiences, and emotional attitudes that are "close" to him/her personally before being asked to write on subjects (and to audiences) that are more general or abstract? Is the "I" central to all writing, as my graph implies? I suspect so, and I think that its absence, coupled with desires for "academically respectable" writing, leads to a great deal of the fatuously impressive and blind student writing we have seen in term papers and elsewhere. In any case, some such schema can help students feel that there is purposeful progression in the composition course, and it can help teachers roughly "place" assignments, even when time for more thorough planning is not available.

## Becoming Pro's

As composition teachers, we are not now treated like professionals. If we wish that to change, we must become professionals. We must learn the discipline we are expected to teach and must learn to pursue the questions it raises. Serious scholars can help us determine where our needs as teachers lie. J. N. Hook has written a book on the subject,[12] and the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) has recently

published a careful and thoughtful statement on teacher preparation.[13] Research findings, through publications of NCTE and elsewhere, are increasingly available and accessible.[14] Informing ourselves of these would enable us to reconsider teaching strategies. What sorts of writing do teachers teach, for example, and with what effects?[15] We could respond intelligently to some pressures that are good-intentioned but ill-informed if we have learned, for example, that instruction in formal grammar has never been demonstrated to have any positive influence on students' writing.[16]

Also available are new ideas and theories[17] which we could adopt, test, and modify in our classrooms, in many cases making our work less burdensome, more efficient, and more effective.

Lack of original thought is a frequent problem in student papers, for example. Fresh insights into the processes of composing,[18] as well as a wide variety of systematic heuristic procedures,[19] analogous to classical invention, are being developed that help students discover new information and perspectives on subjects they wish to explore.

Repetitious and threadbare sentence patterns are another frequent difficulty. Work in sentence combining, developed by Francis Christensen,[20] Frank O'Hare[21] and others, is demonstrating remarkable growth in students' syntactic fluency and flexibility. Without relying on grammar drills, it accomplishes many of the objectives that those drills were intended to achieve but did not. We need to know and begin trying these techniques, which could make our work less tedious and more productive.

Composition will never be the sort of thing a book (or an article) can teach or can teach one how to teach. Though we need to study findings and theories which are making composition currently one of the most exciting areas in many curricula, we need finally to become our own authorities doing our own thinking and research. Our classrooms offer fine laboratories for that, and research designs do not have to be incomprehensibly esoteric; good guides exist to designing writing studies.[22] Through state and national publications and seminars, we could join networks of informed teachers and other scholars benefitting from each other's experience and findings. In a word, we could become professionals.

Only to unwitting pawns, might that dream seem impossible.

To become professionals in composition will require new support by school administrations, new options for in-service workshops and seminars, and new cooperation between teachers and University faculty. English faculty within the University of North Carolina system are coming to see the need for that cooperation. Last year, for example, all but three of the sixteen branches' Departments of English endorsed the following resolution:

1. That the University's Departments of English show greater interest in and stand ready to assume greater responsibility for teacher education in composition.

2. That new and serious consideration be given within teacher education, both in-service and pre-service, to training in writing, reading, and related areas.

3. That professionally formulated statements on teacher preparation, in addition to state certification requirements, be used as guidelines for teacher education in English.

4. That practicing and prospective teachers at all levels, through appropriate study and practicum experience, become familiar with scholarship in fields pertinent to teaching composition and the other language arts: for example, rhetorical theory, linguistics, and literary theory.

5. That each constituent institution of the University reexamine its programs in teacher education in light of this resolution.[23]

Those provisions are positive signs, but the resolution's ideas will not implement themselves. That must be done by people--within University English Departments, administrative structures, and public schools. It depends on people like you and me, as we seek jointly to become professionals in the field of composition. We owe no less to ourselves and our students.

## FOOTNOTES

[1]Notes Toward a New Rhetoric, Evanston, Ill.: Harper & Row, 1967, p. 3.

[2]See Carl Klaus, "Public Opinion and Professional Belief," College Composition and Communication, 27 (December 1976), pp. 335-340; Josephine Miles, "What We Already Know About Composition and What We Need to Know," College Composition and Communication, 27 (May, 1976), pp. 136-141.

[3]Among other sources, see Werner Jaeger, Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture, 3 vols, Oxford; Blackwell, 1954-61, for early history.

[4]See Donald L. Clark, Rhetoric in Greco-Roman Education, New York: Columbia University Press, 1957; H. I. Marrou, A History of Education in Antiquity, New York: New American Library, 1956.

[5]See Edward P. J. Corbett, "The Usefulness of Classical Rhetoric," College Composition and Communication, 14 (October, 1963), pp. 24-26 and Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student, New York: Oxford University Press, 1965. See also James Dervin, "Freedom, Discipline, and Rhetorics," North Carolina English Teacher, 34 (Winter, 1976), pp. 18-23.

[6]See Douglas Ehninger, "The Classical Doctrine of Invention," The Gavel, 39 (1957), pp. 59-62.

[7]See Wilbur S. Howell, Logic and Rhetoric in England, 1500-1700, New York: Russell & Russell, 1961.

[8]See Edmund J. Farrell, "The Beginning Begets: Making Composition Assignments," English Journal, 58 (March, 1969), p. 428.

[9]"Theories of Composition and Actual Writing," Kansas English, 59 (December, 1973), pp. 3-17.

[10]See James R. Squire and Roger K. Applebee, "The Teaching of Composition," High School Instruction Today, New York: Appleton, 1968. Reprinted in Rhetoric and Composition: A Sourcebook for Teachers, ed. Richard L. Graves, Rochelle Park, N. J.: Hayden, 1976. See also Jean Pumphrey, "Teaching English Composition as a Creative Act," College English, 34 (February, 1976), pp. 666-673.

[11]For one interesting matrix, see James Moffett, Teaching the Universe of Discourse, Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1968, especially ch. 2.

[12]J. N. Hook, Paul H. Jacobs, and Raymond D. Crisp, What Every English Teacher Should Know, Urbana, Ill.: NCTE, 1970.

[13]NCTE Standing Committee on Teacher Preparation and Certification, A Statement on the Preparation of Teachers of English, Urbana, Ill.: NCTE, 1976.

[14]See the bibliographies and abstracts regularly published in Research in the Teaching of English and College Composition and Communication, for example.

[15]See James Britton et al., The Development of Writing Ability (11-18), London: Macmillan, 1975.

[16]"In view of the widespread agreement of research studies based upon many types of students and teachers, the conclusion can be stated in strong and unqualified terms: the teaching of formal grammar has a negligible or, because it usually displaces some instruction and practice in actual composition, even a harmful effect on the improvement of writing." Richard Braddock, Richard Lloyd-Jones and Lowell Schoer, Research in Written Composition, Urbana, Ill.: NCTE, 1963, pp. 37-38. For a similar conclusion from a recent New Zealand study, see W. B. Elley et al., "The Role of Grammar in a Secondary School English Curriculum," Research in the Teaching of English, 10 (Spring, 1976), pp. 5-21.

[17]For example Children and Writing in the Elementary School, ed. Richard Larson, New York: Oxford University Press, 1975; Help for the Teacher of Written Composition (K-9), ed. Sara W. Lundsteen, Urbana, Ill.: NCTE, 1975; Rhetoric and Composition: A Sourcebook for Teachers, ed. Richard L. Graves (previously noted); Ideas for English 101, ed. Richard Ohmann and W. B. Coley, Urbana, Ill.: NCTE, 1975; Teaching Composition: 10 Bibliographical Essays, ed. Gary Tate, Fort Worth, Texas: Texas Christian University Press, 1976; Contemporary Rhetoric: A Conceptual Background with Readings, ed. W. Ross Winterowd, New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1975.

[18]See Janet Emig, The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders, Urbana, Ill.: NCTE, 1971.

[19]See Richard Young, "Invention: A Topographical Survey," in Teaching Composition: 10 Bibliographical Essays.

[20]Notes Toward A New Rhetoric.

[21]Sentence Combining: Improving Student Writing Without Formal Grammar Instruction, Urbana, Ill.: NCTE, 1973.

[22]Braddock et al., Research in Written Composition (previously cited); Paul B. Diederich, Measuring Growth in English, Urbana, Ill.: NCTE, 1974.

[23]A draft of this resolution was considered at the meeting of the UNC English Composition Conference held at N. C. Central University, November 13, 1976. The resolution was then considered by the individual Departments of of English within the University system, and it provided the basis for the next meeting of the UNC English Composition Conference, held at UNCC on April 16, 1977. The meeting's theme was "Renewing Responsibilities--English Departments and Composition Education." The resolution's intention has since been endorsed by the UNC Faculty Assembly, and copies have been forwarded to President Friday for consideration by the Board of Governors.

# SEQUENCE IN TEACHING WRITING: IS IT DESIRABLE, USEFUL, POSSIBLE?

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English teachers have always been concerned with sequence in one way or another. The common complaint of secondary school English teachers that their students come to them having been taught nothing in the elementary school or of college instructors that the secondary schools do not teach students to read/write/reason any more is known to nearly everyone; and such complaints suggest that an expected sequence has not in fact been observed by other teachers. The influential Basic Issues Conference of 1958, in Issue 5, addressed the problem of sequence: "A tenth-grade student will almost certainly know the basic concepts and operational methods of algebra, but where in school or college would the teacher know that his students already understand the meaning of such terms as narrative point of view, blank verse, irony, and poetic justice?"[1] The Basic Issues Conference was star-studded, drawing as it did top representatives from four major professional organizations--the American Studies Association, the National Council of Teachers of English, the Modern Language Association, and the College English Association. The issues the group raised were taken seriously by the English teaching profession.

Nevertheless, it is abundantly clear that in the segment quoted, the conferees made a serious error in reasoning. They were, essentially, comparing apples and elephants. English is not algebra, nor should it be, nor is it ever likely to be. English essentially deals much more with the processes of the right hemisphere of the brain, the visual-spatial processes than with the temporal or propositional "if-then" processes which are governed largely by the brain's left hemisphere. Algebra is a left hemisphere, linear activity. English is in essence a right hemisphere, non-linear activity--except when it is taught by those who would, through demanding rote memorization, filling in blanks, or constructing transformational tree-diagrams, turn it into a temporal, left hemisphere activity.[2]

## Why Do Teachers and Administrators Want Sequence?

Sequential programs appeal to one's sense of order. They are convenient--or, at least, look convenient when one sees them on paper. If the tenth grade English teacher knows for sure that subject-verb agreement was taught in Grade 6 (the district handbook for language arts will show this), then he/she is theoretically not responsible for teaching it in Grade 10. And so also with compound or complex sentences, paragraph structure, irony, satire, classical mythology, and any other item that fits beneath the great tent under which English huddles. Happy is the school principal, superintendent, or curriculum supervisor who can tell the public with great assurance that comparison and contrast are taught in the second month of the student's ninth year in school or that metaphor and simile are addressed in the seventh month of the same year. The public has faith in administrators who are on top of things, who know what is going on. So, for purposes of good PR, administrators often have kindly feelings about sequence, which is just another word for order, which has a triple meaning in this context if one cares to seek it out.

## Does Sequencing Have Advantages in English Instruction?

Sequencing has some obvious advantages in English instruction. It seems quite apparent that students need to know how to construct acceptable sentences before they can proceed to the writing of effective paragraphs, for example. They must know certain basic terminology in order to discuss the writing process and to understand comments that others employ in grading or discussing their papers. They cannot talk knowledgeably about what a prepositional phrase is without knowing what a preposition is, although they can and do use prepositional phrases long before they know what prepositions are.

All learning processes possess some sort of inherent sequence, some underlying order. This fundamental, building block order need not be superimposed from without; rather it is a natural part of one's developmental processes.

Sequence has a considerable advantage from the teaching standpoint, because curriculum can be planned effectively if a sequence of teaching steps--priorities, if you will is clearly stipulated. Such planning is based upon analysis of the subject matter in order of complexity or difficulty within the time frame available--a day, a week, a month, a semester, a year, middle school (three or four years), senior high school (usually three years), etc. Every class hour has a sequence of events, many of them preplanned. Why then, teachers might ask, should school terms or the whole of a major school segment, such as middle school, not be similarly preplanned?

Sequencing seems an efficient method of organization. It suggests that teachers will not spend quite so much precious time reteaching what has already been taught. It suggests that they have an overview of their subject area as a totality and that they are proceeding in a coherent and defensible way to present their assigned portion of that totality. In that great chain of being which many English and language arts teachers are trying to plug into, the primary teacher who is teaching cursive penmanship by the Palmer method represents a necessary step in a process which leads to having fifth grade students write compound sentences, seventh grade students write directions about how to make something (the process theme), twelfth grade students write research papers, and Ph.D. candidates write dissertations. Each major activity leads to the next activity in a sequence. Learning, it is hoped, will be <u>incremental</u> if teaching is <u>sequential</u>.

<u>Does Sequencing Work?</u>

Obviously, sequencing works to a degree; education would be in a much more chaotic state than it now is if there were no sequencing at all, and complex learning would be impossible of attainment. However, sequencing has distinct limitations and much that has been suggested about it appears to be based upon questionable underlying assumptions. Some of these assumptions follow:

(1) All students are ready to learn a given body or type of knowledge at a given, pre-determined time;

(2) Students will learn what is taught to them <u>when</u> it is taught to them;

(3) Either all schools or school districts will adopt the same sequences or all students will remain in the same school or schools districts for their elementary and secondary educations;

(4) Students will not forget anything that is taught them;

(5) The entire body of information which is considered useful at the beginning of a formal sequence (Grade 1) will remain static throughout the students' education so that the pre-determined sequencing will not be disturbed.

The suggestions for sequencing espoused by the Basic Issues Conference and later by writers like Clarence W. Hach in "Needed: A Sequential Program In Composition"[3] and by me in "Toward Restructuring the English Curriculum"[4] were predicated upon the existence of a stable, static society which, as we well realize, does not charactize contemporary

American society. Writing of the modern high school population, J. N. Hook reminds his readers that "Many [students] have lived in six or eight communities as their fathers' work changed. Some have attended a dozen schools."[5] And J. Saylor points out, "In big cities across the country, one out of every three high school students drops out of school, and the ones that go to school attend only 70 percent of the time."[6]

Given this situation, there is little doubt that any talk of achieving effective sequencing in English or any other subject, K through 12, is unrealistic. Our society will not stand still long enough for this to happen, even though much teacher time is being spent trying to develop sequences which, before they begin, are likely doomed to failure.

Roberta Wheeler, in her thoughtful article, "A Little Magic," notes "Our present system of mass education emerged from Western Europe, designed to deal with a now-obsolete population." She goes on to point out the basic fallacy in our having used the Western Europe model, which was designed to educate only an elite few beyond the elementary level. She continues, "Now, our nation is attempting to be the first in the world to provide free public education for all of its children. It is being attempted in an outdated system."[7] Until teachers, administrators, and those who train teachers understand this basic fact, it is unlikely that schools will be able in any real way to meet the needs of our highly pluralistic society.

## Can Sequencing Be Practiced?

Surely some sort of sequencing needs to be practiced in the teaching of composition. Learning to write--that is to transcribe speech into a well ordered, understandable, coherent form--is of the utmost necessity and importance to anyone who would function effectively in a highly developed, technological nation. However, learning to write is vastly different from teaching people how to write, and precious little is being done in many modern English classes to teach writing. Students with a natural ability in writing, usually those coming from literate, middle class environments, are rewarded; those who have little native ability in writing are penalized. Errors are pointed out--usually the easy-to-spot errors in spelling, punctuation, agreement, etc.--but little is done to promote a writing environment. In his landmark article, "A Generative Rhetoric of the Sentence,"[8] Francis Christensen writes, "In composition courses we do not really teach our captive charges to write better--we merely expect them to. And we do not teach them how to write better because we do not know how to teach them to write better."[9] Christensen goes on to suggest concrete ways in which teachers can emphasize the structure rather than the mechanics of effective writing.

In the years since Christensen's pioneering work, some excellent strides have been made in the teaching of writing. Donald Murray has touched the teaching styles of many composition teachers by convincing them that writing is a process rather than a product and that revision and rewriting are all-important elements in this process. His influential

book, *A Writer Teaches Writing,*[10] supplemented by such articles as his "Teach Writing as a Process, Not Product"[11] or "The Writing Process"[12] are indispensable resources for anyone who would teach writing realistically and effectively at any level. Ken Macrorie's Uptaught and Telling Writing, both published by Hayden in 1970, also point in new directions, suggesting that student writing must have an audience if it is not to be merely an exercise. Frank O'Hare's Sentence Combining,[13] John C. Mellon's Transformational Sentence-Combining[14] and, somewhat earlier, Paul Roberts' English Sentences[15] suggest ways by which skill in mastering the basic building block of composing, the sentence, can be developed sequentially and effectively.

## Writing as Process and Discovery

Increased emphasis is currently being focused upon writing as a process. In the latest yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education( NSSE) entitled The Teaching of English, Elisabeth McPherson contends, "Good teachers of writing see the product--often a flawed piece of writing--as part of the process, an attempt to understand and control experience. Such teachers have abandoned the notion that satisfactory products can be achieved through knowledge about writing, through drills on usage, rules for punctuation, expeditions in search of topic sentences."[16]

Part of the difficulty that students experience in writing comes from the fact that most of them are not encouraged to find things that they want and need to write about. The typical classroom atmosphere is not conducive to the kind of discovery from which great--or even good--writing proceeds. When an atmosphere of discovery develops and is nurtured, as it has been in Rabun Gap, Georgia where Eliot Wigginton's Foxfire enterprise has produced startlingly effective results in involving students actively and excitedly in writing, the urgency and immediacy of the situation will make possible composition instruction at the highest level, because students will feel a compulsion to learn how to write--and the compulsion will come from within them.

McPherson addresses this point in the NSSE Yearbook: "When the main purpose of writing is seen as discovery, the job of the teacher shifts from laying down rules and formulas to finding ways that will help those discoveries take place. Using language to explore experience becomes a pleasurable human activity, replacing the pain of never quite doing what was wanted, never quite doing it right."[17]

## The Need to Develop the Power of Observation

Frank Whitehead[18] stresses the fact that good writers are good observers, who write out of conviction and with no conscious thought to rules such as those that many students are forced to learn in composition classes.

Whitehead asks, "Do we ourselves, when we speak or write our native language, spend our time thinking about either grammatical rules or stylistic principles? Do we, for that matter, give any of our conscious attention to the words and constructions we are using as such? Don't we rather have to focus our mind on the content of our communication--on just what it is that we have to say?" Whitehead continues, "Write a description of the sea on a stormy day,' says the course-book, 'and remember to use plenty of vivid interesting adjectives.' 'Rubbish!' any practising author would retort. 'What you must do is go and look at the sea on a stormy day and really observe it.'"[19]

The English class must become an environment in which things are happening that youngsters feel a need to write about. Until this happens, it is doubtful that kids will learn to write well. The English class must also become a workshop in which fear of failure is not an inhibiting factor for those who are trying to learn. Small children do not learn to talk by mastering simple sentences, then moving on to compound sentences, then to complex, then to compound-complex, being corrected every time they make an error along the way. And most children, by age three, can communicate quite effectively. But sequential programs seem to evade the fact that language learning takes place in a total environment. What scant research exists on the subject seems to indicate that intensive evaluation bears little correlation to writing improvement.[20] However, ample evidence exists to suggest that students learn to write (1) when they have something they really wish to communicate and (2) when they have an audience with which they want to communicate.

## Kids Are Organic

In closing, perhaps it would be well to cite James Moffett's observation that in teaching language skills" . . . you're dealing with a biological person;. . . and you need an organic growth--it's not pieces put together; they don't add up like that. You have a whole all the time, and the parts are imminent within the whole from the very beginning."[21]

As long as English teachers think that they are dealing primarily with things--rules, great works, sentence and paragraph structure--they will try to segment what they are doing and delude themselves into believing that this segmentation is sequence. But without throwing out or ignoring the need to deal with things, teachers must also realize that they are dealing with organic beings--kids. If the kid is not considered before the things, no good teaching can take place because, no matter how inspired a teacher's lessons are, some kids will not benefit from them at the particular time that they are taught. The aim in American schools, if indeed our stated purpose is to make education available to and meaningful for everyone, must be to work with all students where they are and bring them as far as possible toward the realization of their highest potentials. The structure of a discipline must imply sequence; but the individual youngsters in any class will necessarily progress at their own speeds within the sequential materials. To superimpose a pre-determined sequence upon all middle school or senior high students is as absurd as decreeing that all sixteen-year-olds will wear size 10 shoes.

FOOTNOTES

[1]See George Winchester Stone, ed., "The Basic Issues in the Teaching of English," PMLA, 74 (September, 1959), pp. 1-12.

[2]For a discussion of this, Madeline Hunter's "Right-Brained Kids in Left-Brained Schools," Today's Education, 65 (November-December, 1976), pp. 45-49, provides a good starting point.

[3]English Journal, 49 (November, 1960), pp. 536-547. See also Hach's "Needed: Sequences in Composition," English Journal (January, 1968) and "Coordinating English Curricula, 9-12," in R. Baird Shuman, ed., Questions English Teachers Ask (Rochelle Park, NJ: Hayden Book Co., 1977), pp. 3-5.

[4]In David Stryker, ed., Method in the Teaching of English (Champaign, Illinois: NCTE, 1967), pp. 43-50.

[5]The Teaching of High School English, 4th ed. (New York: Ronald Press, 1972), pp. 10-11.

[6]The School of the Future--Now (Washington, D. C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1974), p. 54.

[7]The Clearing House, 50 (April, 1977), p. 345.

[8]College Composition and Communication, 14 (October, 1963), pp. 155-161.

[9]Ibid., p. 155.

[10]Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1968.

[11]The Leaflet, 71 (Fall, 1972).

[12]In Allen Berger and Blanche Hope Smith, eds., Language Activities: Classroom Practices in Teaching English, 1973-74 (Urbana, Illinois: NCTE, 1973).

[13]Urbana, Illinois: NCTE, 1973.

[14]Urbana, Illinois: NCTE, 1969.

[15]New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1962.

[16]Chicago: NSSE, 1977. (Volume 76:1).

[17]Op. cit., p. 181.

[18]The Disappearing Dias (London: Chatto & Windus, 1971).

[19]Ibid., pp. 152-153.

[20]See Lois V. Arnold, "Writer's Cramp and Eyestrain--Are They Paying Off?" English Journal, 53 (January, 1964), pp. 10-15.

[21]"On Language," North Carolina English Teacher, 33 (Winter, 1976), pp. 11-12.

# THE BASICS OF EVALUATION

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Although pundits allege that the lone certainties in life are death and taxes, composition teachers know otherwise. They realize that evaluation, an integral part of their professional responsibility, belongs on the list. Like the phoenix, it is destined never to disappear. Like that legendary bird, it must be reckoned with . . . sooner or later.

Sooner is probably the wiser option. Especially in an age characterized by accountability and litigation is there good reason to evaluate regularly. At such a time, moreover, there is even better reason to evaluate wisely. This chapter will thus outline strategies crucial to wise--or, if one prefers, effective--evaluation. No attempt will be made to be complete or definitive; evaluation is so immense a subject, and so fraught with moral and legal as well as pedagogical implications, that anything short of a doctoral dissertation can hope to treat only matters of overriding importance. Such a focus, however, may be as opportune as it is necessary. Because the public continues to clamor for "basics," it is indeed desirable (if not downright vital) that composition teachers ponder anew--and perhaps frequently--the basics of evaluation.

Among those basics are evaluation scales designed to provide grades. Two types are popular. Linear, or weighted, scales direct their users to a mathematical analysis of writing ability--that is, to number grades, which can easily be converted to letter grades if evaluators desire. Illustrative of such scales is the "Educational Testing Service Composition Scale" (see Appendix A), developed, validated, and popularized about a decade ago by Paul B. Diederich of ETS. Commonly known as the Diederich Scale, it identifies eight factors as important in the evaluation process. Four of those factors relate to "General Merit"; four, to "Mechanics." The first four factors represent sixty percent of the worth of a paper; the last four, forty percent.[1] Teachers employing that scale, just like teachers employing any other linear scale, obligate themselves both to the factors that are identified and to the weights affixed to those factors. Without such an obligation on their part, there can be no uniformity of evaluation and, therefore, no uniformity of grading. Of course, "perfect uniformity" is possible only after teachers using the scale have had countless opportunities to "test run" it and to compare and discuss their numerically summarized perceptions.

Ms. Nancy C. Millett of Wichita State University illustrates how the Diederich Scale--or any linear scale, for that matter--can be altered to accommodate individual preferences. Without changing the Diederich's eight factors, she adapts their weights to meet demands she believes important at six grade levels (see Appendix B). The revision, she admits, was "simple . . . to make" [2]; other revisions of the Diederich, like revisions of other linear scales, are no more difficult. Teachers wishing to introduce them have only to agree on the factors involved and their respective weights.

If linear scales can be said to identify factors in writing that are public and explicit, then non-linear scales deserve to be seen as projecting factors in writing that are public but implicit. The latter make no intrusions upon mathematics or computations. Instead, they provide models of writing of varying quality, each model projecting the characteristics of a particular grade designation--A, C+, D, or whatever. Tacitly or otherwise, teachers creating and/or using non-linear scales maintain that linear scales mislead in their attempts to itemize and isolate factors in writing; their belief is that those factors need to be seen and evaluated in relation to one another and that the whole of a paper is greater than the sum of its individual parts.

Probably the best-known non-linear scale originally appeared in 1960. "A Scale for Evaluation of High School Student Essays" (see Appendix C) is a creation of The California Association of Teachers of English and the California State Articulation Conference Joint Subcommittee on Composition, which in 1957 commissioned a study of the writing ability of California high school seniors. The scale which emerged identifies essays at six letter-grade levels: A, B, C+, C-, D and F. The team of educators charged with making the selection did not take their responsibilities lightly: their search took them to 1788 essays representing 207 institutions, or approximately 39 percent of the public high schools in the state, and to a horde of professionally valid procedures for evaluating written discourse, all of which are discussed in a 32-page publication available from the National Council of Teachers of English.

As the writers of that publication suggest, the scale neither represents nor suggests a magic formula. Yet it projects criteria and relationships potentially useful in composition evaluation. Those who argue that it does not manifest qualities they value in writing are faced with an obvious alternative if they wish to employ a non-linear scale: they can create their own. In evolving one, they need only to make certain that the models that are made public truly represent writing competence--or lack thereof--appropriate to the accompanying letter-grade designations.

Some teachers, however, favor neither linear nor non-linear scales, yet desire aids to guide their evaluation. Representative of what has been and can be developed is a form that appeared in the February, 1973, issue of College Composition and Communication (see Appendix D).

Originally designed for use with college and university students, it has also been employed effectively at other grade levels. Its intent is to restrict all comments on a piece of writing to one sheet of paper and, more specifically, to the demands of that sheet: first, the evaluator is obligated to identify at least one strength; subsequently, he or she can move to no more than three weaknesses and, still later, to a like number of recommendations for improvements to be attempted on the following paper; finally, the evaluator has an opportunity for "Additional Comments," a section to be used as a catch-all--perhaps for a comment of praise and/or one of caution. The design, and the strength, of the four-part sheet is to restrict an evaluator's response to a paper, to force him or her into "Controlling the Bleeding," the title of the article which originally carried and explained the form.

"Controlling the Bleeding" relates to yet another point basic in composition evaluation. Intensive evaluation, or the marking of every flaw in student writing, seldom provides dividends equal to the time-consuming effort. In fact, it often serves as a deterrent to composition improvement, the writer inundated by such well-intentioned negativism invariably and perhaps even publicly concluding that he or she is beyond linguistic hope. Far more inspiring and productive in most instances is a judicious and humane blend of strength- and weakness-citing, the evaluator revealing, as a result, that while significant flaws may mar a communication, commendable strengths flavor it, too, those strengths being worthy of at least as much evaluator and writer attention. To put the point another way, normally, only if a writer believes that he or she is doing some things right is there a willingness to work at improving those things that are wrong.

Still another point basic to effective evaluation concerns appropriate evaluators. Teachers should not see themselves as the lone audiences capable of responding profitably to student writing. Peer evaluation serves nicely, too, especially when teachers prepare and equip their charges for the responsibility. Again, an appropriate form can prove helpful; an example of such a form appeared in the November, 1973, issue of the Illinois English Bulletin (see Appendix E).

Two additional basics also demand at least cursory attention. Teachers anxious to evaluate sensitively and sensibly must, first of all, recognize that a horde of helpful theories and strategies are available to them, if only they will take time to investigate. While there is no ideal starting point, two recently published volumes from NCTE warrant recommendation: for K-9 teachers, Help for the Teacher of Written Composition*--New Directions in Research (1976), edited by Sara W. Lundsteen; for all teachers of composition, but especially those working in middle, junior and senior high schools, Evaluating Composition: Describing, Measuring, Judging (1977), edited by Charles R. Cooper and Lee Odell.

This chapter's final point is doubtless the most important basic of all: pedagogically sound evaluation of written composition, regardless of one's teaching level, is best conveyed not by a letter- or a number-grade but in a statement. As Richard Lloyd-Jones says, "If we really believe that words and sentences and paragraphs are important, maybe we should insist that our evaluations be expressed in such language."[3]

## NOTES

[1] Shortly after developing the scale, Diederich incorporated several changes. Originally it contained only seven factors; "Manuscript Form" did not appear. Originally, too, the first two sections of the scale, those treating ideas and organization, projected number values of 1 through 5, like the other factors on the scale; doubling their worth came later. For details, see three works by Diederich: "Problems and Possibilities of Research in the Teaching of Written Composition," Research Design and the Teaching of English, Urbana, Illinois: NCTE, 1964; "How to Measure Growth in Writing Ability," English Journal, LV (April, 1966), 444-446; and Measuring Growth In English, Urbana, Illinois: NCTE, 1974.

[2] Nancy C. Millett, "On Snarls and Straighteners," Illinois English Bulletin, L, 1 (October, 1969), 13-18.

[3] Richard Lloyd-Jones, "Grading Compositions," The Student's Right to Write. Urbana, Illinois: NCTE, no publication date.

## Appendix A

### PROJECT ON IMPROVING COMPETENCE IN ENGLISH EXPRESSION

RATING FORM FOR STUDENT COMPOSITIONS

Reader # _____
Student # _____
Date _____

DIRECTIONS: For each quality listed below, encircle the number that most nearly describes the position of this paper on the following scale:

1. Failing 2. Passing 3. Good 4. Superior 5. Exceptional

1. GENERAL MERIT

| | | F 2 | P 4 | G 6 | S 8 | E 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.1 | Quality and Development of Ideas..... | 2 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 10 |
| 1.2 | Organization, Relevance, Movement..... | 2 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 10 |
| 1.3 | Style, Flavor, Individuality..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1.4 | Wording..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Total General Merit Score _____

2. MECHANICS

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2.1 | Grammar, Sentence Structure..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2.2 | Punctuation..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2.3 | Spelling..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2.4 | Manuscript Form..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Total Mechanics Score _____

GRAND TOTAL _____ (maximum of 50)

## Appendix B

| | | F D C B A | WEIGHTS GRADE 7-8-9 | 10-11 | 12 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION | Quality and Development of Ideas | 1 2 3 4 5 | | | |
| | Organization, Relevance, Movement | 1 2 3 4 5 | | | |
| | | Sum X 5 _____ | 50% | 50% | 50% |
| STYLE | Wording and Phrasing | 1 2 3 4 5 | | | |
| | | Sum x 1 | 10% | | |
| | | or x 2 _____ | | 20% | |
| | | or x 3 | | | 30% |
| | Style, Flavor, Individuality | 1 2 3 4 5 | | | |
| MECHANICS | Grammar, Sentence Structure | 1 2 3 4 5 | | | |
| | Punctuation | 1 2 3 4 5 | | | |
| | Spelling | 1 2 3 4 5 | | | |
| | Manuscript Form, Legibility | 1 2 3 4 5 | | | |
| | | Sum x 2 | 40% | | |
| | | or x 1.5 _____ | | 30% | |
| | | or x 1 | | | 20% |

Total Score (Not a Percent) _____

## Appendix C

### A Scale for the Evaluation of High School Student Essays
### NCTE - California Association of Teachers of English

"Swinus Americanus" is a name often applied to those ignorant campers and travelers who find it easier to leave their refuse for someone else to pick up rather than dispose of it properly themselves. A lack of outdoor manners is one of the primary reasons why people unconsciously destroy the natural beauty of our great out-of-doors. The sum of money spent each year by local, state, and federal agencies to keep America clean is almost unimaginable. In Yellowstone Park, one of our largest tourist attractions, it cost the U. S. government over two million dollars a year to keep the roads and campgrounds free from trash and refuse.

After the turn of the century, many prominent organizations, such as the Izaak Walton league, realized the need of educating the element which disregarded all ethics of good camping. Apparently, little progress was made, and the situation grew worse and worse. In 1950, most of our highways and campgrounds looked like one huge trash dump. Reform was long overdue. Up sprang a number of campaigns which stressed the importance of good outdoor manners. The "Keep America Beautiful Campaign" was organized, and "litterbug" became a household word. Municipal and state governments joined the parade by enacting laws which imposed heavy fines for careless motorists who littered highways and byways. Magazines and newspapers carried articles and pictures of this shameful aspect of American life. Little by little, the people grew aware of their responsibility of preserving what belonged to them. "Preserving" is an accurate word if one realized that campgrounds strewn with garbage and litter are excellent breeding places for disease-bearing insects. A piece of broken glass may magnify the sun's rays just enough to kindle a fire which may envelope thousands and thousands of acres of valuable watershed.

Cooperation with this clean-up campaign has been overwhelming. The manufacturers of canned and bottled beverages are experimenting with disposable paper or cardboard containers. Gas stations have volunteered to dispose of refuse-filled paper sacks which motorists carry on their outings and replace with this a new sack. In many parks, refuse cans bear the imprint of an imaginary kangaroo called Parky. "Parky says--" is another familiar antilitterbug slogan. Gradually, through posters, pamphlets, articles, signboards, and emphatic speeches, Americans have learned a valuable lesson in good manners. The fight, however, must continue. Not until our roadsides, campgrounds, and parks appear as they did before the advent of "swinus Americanus" will the fight be won. By adhering to good outdoor manners, we will help to win this fight.

II

What are the real causes of juvenile delinquency? Who is to blame for the misdemeanors of today's teenagers? A few weeks ago, as one of a large number of students representing the various high schools in Sonoma County, I was brought face to face with this problem of juvenile delinquency. At the invitation of the County Probation Department, we attended a session of Juvenile Court and visited the County Jail and Juvenile Hall and with Mr. Becklunc, County Probation Officer, we began to realize the full scope and gravity of the situation.

Why, we asked is juvenile delinquency such a problem? Who is to blame? "Parents" was the answer every time. The teenagers we saw in Juvenile Court and in Juvenile Hall were there for many reasons, to be sure. But all these stemmed from the same source--parents. With some, it was lack of proper parental supervision; with some, lack of one or both parents; and with others, neglect, disinterest, or depravity on the part of the parents. There were, as in every case, a few exceptions to this generalization. What about those offenders whose excuse was rebellion against conformity, against the standardized social laws in general, we asked? The answer? Couldn't this feeling of revolt be curbed, overcome by the offender's parents?

The prevention of juvenile delinquency is not an easy task to undertake. We saw how much the city, county, state, and even nation were doing to help unfortunate minors overcome their problems and lead new useful lives. But the boarding homes, the camps, the schools, for correction are not helping to prevent delinquency. The campaign must begin in the home. The full significance of the parental role must be realized.

III

In my four years at high school almost all of my subjects have interested me. But the subject I like the most and which interests me most is history.

Before I was a junior I didn't like history at all. I hoped never to have anything to do with it. But when I became a junior I had to take United States History as a requirement for graduation. I groaned at the thought of history.

The first few weeks of the course were miserable because I kept telling myself that I didn't like history. My dislike for the course showed in my first quarter's grade. But as the term progressed I grew very interested in the subject. The main reason for my growing to like the course was my teacher. She had a way of getting points across as well as making the course interesting.

I liked the teacher so much and I became so interested in history that when I was a low senior I decided to take a course in California History. The same teacher taught this course. This course, since it dealt with the discovery and development of our state, proved to be even more interesting than the one in United States History.

Now as a high senior I am furthering my study of history by taking Modern History. I only regret that I didn't take this course for a full year instead of just a half a year.

When I go to college this fall I hope to continue on in the field of history because there is still so much to learn. The further study of history will lead me to one day becoming a history teacher.

IV

Life on a farm is full of excitement, hard work, and enjoyment. It takes long hours and hard work to keep a farm in good condition. One has to be a horse doctor, weather bureau, crop expert, and many things all at once to be able to handle all the problems that come up on the farm. One also has to be able to take dissapointments, discouragement and dispair.

An average day on a dairy farm usually goes like this: up at 4 or 5 A.M. in the morning, a good hardy breakfast, and to work. The cattle are brought in from pasture, milked, and put out again; all the equipment has to be washed and put away, and the milk stored in a clean, cool place until it is picked up. The milk is then taken to a milk company to be made into butter, cheese, and so on. Then comes the plowing or harvesting, depending on what time of year it is. This goes on till lunch and continued after until it's time for milking again. After milking is done, it is supper time. When supper is over, social life begins. Life in the evening is pretty much the same anywhere only there is a longer distance to get to town or where ever there is to go. There is always something to do on a farm. Sometimes in waiting for a calf or colt to be born or maybe a prize bull has pneumonia and the Vet has been delayed. Idle time is rarely found on a farm.

There are many advantages. Some are in seeing animals grow and turn into prize stock and seeing fields green and healthy.

Disadvantages are; one never knows if the ensuing year will bring success or failure.

V

One of the chief causes for juvenile delinquency is not having anything to do. If they had a lot of good places to go & good things do then I don't think there would be as much as there is now. In the big cities the streets are full of big stores and factories, but if they

had plenty of recreation halls, then that would be one thing the teenagers could do. People should also encourage the teenagers to take part in sports and other activites--some place they would feel needed. When there is only one movie or show in town and nc recreation hall, then there is nothing to do. Teenagers like to keep doing different things. If they keep doing the same thing all the time, then they soon grow tired of it and start looking for something else to do. They don't care whether it's bad or not, all they care about is doing something. Teenagers are very restless people.

Sometimes, in some cases, the parents are at fault. They don't teach their children right from wrong. They should start when the child is very young and teach them, then they wouldn't want to do anything wrong. Parents should also bring their children up in church. It has been proven that children that have been raised in church, accompanied by their parents, grow up with a feeling of security and they are very good teenagers. Those kind of teenagers do have something to do--they have all kinds of church activities to participate in.

I think that if parents wants their children to be good, then they should take them and go themselves to church.

VI

The causes for the juvenile delinquence are not the parents or the public and official think. It is the kids themselves and public who causes them.

There isn't enough for a kid to grow up with, nothing to do. There are a lot of school activity for one to get into. But the ones who are in them are not the delinquence. Most of the juvenile delinquence are the boys or girls who are not very popular in school and are not in school activity. They may attend school game, but they won't sit in the chearing section or yell to support their school team. They sit off to the side and yet they want to be notice. They won't go out for sport to get attention because they know they won't be good enough. They hards are bigger than the other kids.

For attention they go out and paint the town red. By steeling hub cab off cars or get into gang fights. This way they can go back to school and tell all about how they destroy property.

I live in a small town and we are not bother very much with this problem. You mostly fine this in your big cities like New York or Los Angeles.

Maybe in a since I am wrong about there is nothing to do, maybe there is to much to do. In a big city you can fine a lot of thing to do.

Also in comparing a small town kids with a big city you will fine that all the kids in small town will know each other or just about every body in the hole town. But in a big city how many kids will you know. Just the ones in ycur little group. There are to many kids around to get to know them all, and you don't have time to because you are going to the show with someone or you have to stay home and take care of your little sister.

I think the ways to cut down on this is to put up recreation centers and have the kid take part in sports and other curriqular activities.

Also if we can regress back to the years when our parents were kids. We would fine that there parents, our grandparents, did not take the responsibility of there kids. The kid themselves were responsible for their own action.

That mean the kid could be sent to jail for what they have done and not the parents.

So let the teenager have his own responsibility and there will be less juvenile deliquency.

Appendix D

Date: _____ Paper# _____ Student _____

STRENGTH(S):

1.

2.

3.

WEAKNESS(ES):

1.

2.

3.

MATTER(S) TO WORK ON IN THE NEXT PAPER:

1.

2.

3.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

_____ _____

GRADE GRADER

## Appendix E

Paper written by _____

1. Read the whole paper without stopping and put a check in the margin on the left side of the paper for any line that was not clear or that you had to read twice.

2. Briefly, what is the paper saying?

3. Now go back to the lines you checked in 1. Why weren't they clear? Tell him using grading marks and comments.

4. Rate the following skills:

| | Good | Mediocre | Poor | Has None |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Beginning is interesting | | | | |
| b. Beginning is effective | | | | |
| c. Has a thesis or point | | | | |
| d. Organization of whole paper | | | | |
| e. Paper has interesting, pointed details | | | | |
| f. Supports his points | | | | |
| g. Uses specific examples | | | | |
| h. Clarity of paper | | | | |
| i. Effectiveness of conclusion | | | | |
| j. Length | Too Short | Right | Too Long | |

5. Does this paper have anything that shows originality or creativity? If so, what?

6. The best thing about this paper is:

7. Suggestions for improvement:

8. Other comments:

# Grades 4-6

- Motivating Writing
- Writing for Varieties of Audiences
- Writing Reports, Reviews, Arguments
- Writing Creatively

TOPIC: Motivating Writing

Vickie Rose
South Hoke School
Raeford, NC
Grades 3-4

# MUSIC AS A WRITING STIMULUS

## I. Rationale

Children have feelings which they express in many delightful ways. Music is one medium that can be used to stimulate these feelings. Through playing music and allowing children to move to it in their own ways, their own styles, and their own tones, we are allowing and encouraging creative expression. If they can put these feelings into words, in a logical and sequential pattern, they will have developed a composition. The purpose of this writing task, therefore, is to put music into words on the theme of "How I Feel."

## II. Objectives

1) To experience freedom of movement
2) To overcome feelings of shyness
3) To learn to express feelings
4) To practice the mechanics of sentence structure
5) To develop a good self-concept

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Discuss movement as a way of expressing one's self-tempo, mood, etc.
2) Play short excerpts from a record as students move the way they feel led to move. (Explain safety precautions so no one is injured or unreasonably embarrassed.)
3) Discuss how the children felt and why they moved as they did. Repeat this several times.
4) Play more music, but this time have the students write a sentence about how they feel. Repeat this procedure five times. Each time the student must write an entirely different sentence. (The sentences must all begin and end differently.)
5) Discuss these sentences by having various ones read orally--not for criticism, but for information and self help.
6) Collect the papers and have individual conferences with students to discuss strengths and weaknesses.

## IV. Procedure for Students

1) Listen to music and move reasonably as it influences you to move
2) Discuss your feelings with the class.
3) As each selection of music is played, write a sentence describing how you feel. Each sentence must be completely different.
4) Discuss some of these sentences with the class.
5) Submit your sentences to the teacher for a conference on strengths and weaknesses.

V. Evaluation

No grade will be given. Conferences will be held with each student to discuss strengths and weaknesses, relative to "feeling free" and writing well.

TOPIC: Motivating Writing

Sharon D. Procter
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Grades 4-6

# COME HUG A TREE

## I. Rationale

Giving children the opportunity to touch, hug, and talk to a tree--and, eventually, call the tree "his/her own"--is the purpose of this writing lesson.

Assuming that most children live in a "my experiences" world, it seems appropriate that the teacher use this assumption as a basis for motivating children to write.

## II. Objectives

1) To develop a sense of confidence in speaking orally
2) To give students the opportunity of working together in revising written work
3) To provide sensory experiences

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Initiate the unit by letting students analyze and write about any object in the classroom. Allow several minutes for this. (Instruct students to keep work from this unit in a notebook.)
2) Divide class into working groups for the purpose of reading the papers on the "object description" and making critical suggestions for rewriting. (If a student would rather have the teacher check his/her work, this is possible.)
3) Take students on a nature walk, specifying that each one choose "his/her tree." Permit them to study the tree 15 to 20 minutes.
4) After the experience of choosing a tree, take the students back to the classroom:
   a) Divide the students into groups
   b) Tell students to give their first impressions of the tree, while one person writes down the thoughts and ideas.
5) Allow students to take at least ten minutes of each day to "talk" to their tree. (The teacher may want to put a limit on the number of students who ask to leave the room. A possibility is two students per trip.)
6) Permit students to "talk" to their tree for at least one week before writing the paper on "What Is A Tree?"
7) After a week (or more) of permitting students to talk to their trees, assign the task of writing a composition, "What Is A Tree?"
8) Have students break into groups for the purpose of offering critical suggestions to classmates.

9) Instruct students to revise their compositions.
10) Collect all papers for teacher evaluation.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Students will analyze an object in the classroom:
   a) They follow its outline with their eyes, noticing everything about it
   b) They draw the object in the air with their fingers
   c) The students then close their eyes and recreate the object in their minds. After this, they open their eyes and look at the object. Did they miss anything?
   d) The students close their eyes; recreate the object again; write a description of the object.
2) Students will break up into groups (or some may work with teacher on an individual basis) for the purpose of critical suggestions and rewriting.
3) After choosing a tree, the students will sit near their tree, and study it from all points of view (15 to 20 minutes).
4) At teacher's request, students will break up into groups and choose one person to record the thoughts of the students' first impressions about their trees.
5) Students must return the next day, spend at least fifteen minutes with their tree. This day, the student can "hug" their tree.
6) Students should keep a daily record of their visits, watching and observing any changes in their trees. Also, they can write down any new impressions about their trees.
7) After one week (or more) of observation and record keeping, students will write a composition, or poem, on "What Is A Tree?"
8) Classmates will offer critical suggestions to other peers, employing the group method.
9) Students will rewrite the composition.
10) After completing the work, students will hand in the papers to the teacher.

V. Evaluation

Instead of giving each student a grade, the teacher may want to evaluate the compositions by adding his/her positive comments. Several points to keep in mind when evaluating could be a student's effort and quality of writing. As always, the teacher should pay particular attention to the student's ability.

TOPIC: Motivating Writing

Cindy Davis
Riverview School
Creston, NC
Grade 6

# GRIPE BOX

## I. Rationale

This lesson gives students the opportunity to write about problems they encounter. The teacher collects paragraphs on 3 x 5 cards from the students over a given time period to place in a "Gripe Box" somewhere in the room. They have the chance to "speak-out" about school policies, homework, or world affairs. This motivating activity can lead to lessons on argumentative writing.

## II. Objectives

1) To recognize a reason for writing
2) To focus on a familiar topic
3) To develop argumentative writing skills
4) To review the topic sentence of a paragraph

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Cover and decorate a box to place in the classroom. Supply a stack of 3 x 5 cards.
2) Explain to the class or group that they are going to have the chance to write a complaint (compliment if they desire) about any problem facing them at home, school, or world.
3) Make clear to students the time element for feeding the box. This may be only one class period or several days.
4) Explain that the questions be placed in paragraph form on the 3 x 5 cards. Point out that the topic sentence will be stressed in this lesson.
5) On "Gripe Day" (the time for opening the box) the teacher will read several to the class (ignoring names will probably be better).
6) (Follow-Up) Pass the "Gripe Box." After asking each student to choose a card, instruct them to argue with that complaint by writing a composition. They may agree or disagree and must support their conclusion.
7) Discuss and evaluate the results.

## IV. Procedure for Students

1) Follow directions given by the teacher for using the "Gripe Box"
2) React honestly to any problem seen at home, school, or world that needs to be improved or changed. If there are no problems, one can write from a positive standpoint. Place as many cards as needed in the box.
3) Remember the topic sentence and stick to it throughout the paragraph. Share on "Gripe Day."

4) If asked to do the follow-up exercise, agree or disagree with the "Gripe" drawn from the box. Be able to support your opinions by writing an argumentative composition.
5) Participate in the discussion of the papers responding to the supportive details and examples in them. Remember that one has to respect the opinion of others in an argumentative composition.

V. Evaluation

This lesson can be evaluated in terms of the response to the motivation, and the mastery of using the topic sentence in a paragraph. The follow-up is evaluated by how well the student can support the agreement or disagreement of the "Gripe."

TOPIC: Motivating Writing

Ouida Hughes Bass
North Belmont Elementary School
Belmont, NC 28012
Grade 6

# SILLY SOUNDS (ALLITERATION)

## I. Rationale

All children love repetitive sounds. Alliterative sounds used in poetry and prose make composition more lively and interesting and are found frequently in elementary literature. Once pointed out to the child, these sounds become increasingly interesting to him and stimulate his interest in reading and in creating original examples of his own. The following activities are a good pre-introduction to a sixth-grade poetry unit of work.

## II. Objectives

1) To learn the meaning of alliteration as a composition technique
2) To acquire appreciation of the beauty of sounds
3) To have fun making sounds and hearing the different sounds in the English language
4) To practice writing original alliterative phrases and sentences

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Find several good examples of alliteration in children's books or make up ones of your own. Write these on the board before the class meeting. (Hint: Dr. Seuss books are good for this activity.)
   Sample Sentences:
   1) Merry Mark made millions mining minerals.
   2) Gorgeous George gave the giants a great gift.
   3) Lazy little lizards lay lifelessly on the log.
   4) Bright blue bubbles blew beyond the bridge.
   5) Four fluffy feathers fell from the farm fowl.
2) Talk about what alliteration means and refer to examples on board.
3) Prepare beforehand some alliterative sentences on sentence strips. Ask for volunteers to read them aloud. Can children hear the sounds that are repeated?
4) Collect several small boxes labeling them "M Sounds," "G Sounds," etc. Use a wide-tip magic marker to print single words on squares of stiff paper. Be sure that these words can make a sentence when joined together during the class activity. Pass one box around until those words are chosen. Then the children go to the front of the room and assemble themselves so that the words make a sentence. The results are often very funny and sixth graders will love this "silly" activity. Other children in the class will be eager to take their turns with another box of words.

5) Ask if the children can find classmates in the room whose full names are alliterative. In most classes, there are five or six such names and "alliteration" quickly becomes a familiar word in their vocabulary. To reinforce memory of this new word, write and pronounce it several times during the class.
6) Distribute paper for students to create some sentences of their own. Use a brightly-colored paper (construction paper is good) because this makes the activity more exciting and different! Move about the room to be sure slow starters get going! Make a suggestion of a possible beginning if necessary. (I suggest five sentences for the activity.)
7) Have a bulletin board cleared and ready to post the results.
8) Assignment: Follow-up activity--bring to class any examples of alliteration found in advertisements.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Listen carefully for beginning sounds that are alike.
2) Take part in choosing a word and finding a place in the sentence to be assembled.
3) Use your best handwriting.
4) Take part in the follow-up activity.

V. Evaluation

Children will show results of the effectiveness of this activity in sharper observation of printed materials they see, taking much satisfaction in recognizing alliterative techniques when observed. Sounds will be easier to distinguish and creative projects in writing seem to flow more easily after this practice. Several days later, it is wise to renew the acquisition of the skill by practicing more silly sounds and sentences.

TOPIC: Motivating Writing

Rachel Cox
Pinewood School
Mt. Holly, NC
Grade 4

# HEY! LOOK! I'M WRITING!

## I. Rationale

Every child has something which is of importance to him/her. They can verbalize that thing to a simple degree, and perhaps, to a greater degree, through the right stimulation or challenge.

In this first experience in writing, beginning with the name of a person, place, or thing from his/her own experience, the learner will add other words to create a paragraph having meaning for himself/herself and his/her readers.

## II. Objectives

1) To gain confidence to begin writing stories
2) To practice writing skills such as sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and paragraph structure
3) To develop freedom of expression
4) To become aware of language or dialect
5) To heighten awareness of self

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) On a sheet of paper have students write one word (can be a person, place or thing) which has much meaning to them.
2) Have them make a list of as many things as they can which show how they feel and/or what they know about that person, place, or thing. Explain that they are not to worry about spelling.
3) Ask them to compose a paragraph about the first word they wrote using the descriptive words they have written about it.
4) Illustrate what you mean by writing the same things on the board which you have requested of them: your own list of words in correct paragraph form showing correct indentation, capitalization, and punctuation.
5) When pupils' paragraphs have been finished, if they would like to share their work by reading them aloud to the class, allow each one to do so.
6) Collect papers to be placed on bulletin board with the caption, "Hey! Look! I'm Writing!"

## IV. Procedure for Students

1) Write as the teacher directs.
2) Compose a paragraph using correct form as illustrated by the teacher.

3) Read paragraph to class if so desired.
4) Hand in completed work for display on bulletin board.

V. Evaluation

No written evaluation would be given for this first assignment in writing. As students become more confident in follow-up assignments, evaluation would be made on effort and quality.

TOPIC: Motivating Writing

Becky Anderson
Flat Rock Elementary
Mt. Airy, NC
Grade 4

# A DAY IN THE LIFE OF . . .

## I. Rationale

Children are stimulated to write creatively when they are encouraged to write about their own experiences--and they are experiencing something everyday of their lives. By selecting a student each week to share these happenings and events in his/her life, the teacher is offering students a reason to write.

## II. Objectives

1) To develop an understanding of one's self
2) To practice writing basic writing skills
3) To encourage children to write descriptively about themselves
4) To develop oral expression
5) To stimulate creative writing

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Prepare a bulletin board which says, "A Day In The Life Of . . ."
2) Every Friday choose a child in the class as child of the week.
3) Put child's name on the bulletin board.
4) Instruct child to gather materials over the week-end about himself/herself. (Include photographs, pictures, drawings, favorite baseball cap, etc.) Also instruct student to do interview with parents to gather information about birth, youth, etc.
5) Instruct child to write sentences or paragraph describing the materials he/she brought in. (Be sure to include past, present and future events.)
6) If student desires, assist him/her with arranging his/her materials on the bulletin board on Monday.
7) Give class time for student to go over his/her materials.

## IV. Procedure for Students

1) When chosen for the child of the week, select photos, pictures, drawings, etc. to bring to class on Monday.
2) Write a sentence or paragraph describing the materials selected.
3) Interview parents to gather information about birth and youth.
4) Bring all information and materials and place on bulletin board on Monday.
5) Go over information with class.
6) If new happenings or events occur anytime during the week, add these to bulletin board.
7) Take down all material on Friday.

V. Evaluation

No grade or mark is placed on any work. The teacher will note mechanical mistakes which student needs help on.

TOPIC: Motivating Writing

Esther Carver
Blue Ridge
Glenville, NC 28736
Grade 3

# ORGANIZING PARAGRAPHS

## I. Rationale

Building paragraphs is important to writing. Children need much work in this area. The main concern in this lesson is helping children develop paragraph sense.

## II. Objectives

1) To help children develop paragraph sense
2) To practice paragraph organization
3) To practice handwriting
4) To develop sentence structure

## III. Procedures for Teacher

1) Discuss with the children that you will give them a card or piece of paper and they are to write one sentence on it. The sentence is about what has happened or will happen that day.
2) Collect cards or papers.
3) Put sentences on the board. Choose as many as you want the class to work with.
4) Example: Susie got wet on her way to school.
   It rained during the night.
   Mike didn't come to school.
   Becky stepped in a puddle.
5) Ask questions about the sentences. Which sentences tell us things people did this morning? Which sentences tell us about the weather this morning? Which sentences should we write first, about people or about weather? Why?
6) Have children write down the sentences on the board and put a number beside them as to what order you think they happened.
7) Have students write in paragraph form starting with number one, then two and so on until they have written all the sentences.
8) Have a student volunteer to read what they have written. If read correctly discuss with them why it was put in that order. If read incorrectly, discuss how things can be put in a certain order of happening.
9) Discuss with the children that a paragraph is considered by most authorities to be a series of sentences that project a single idea. Discuss this idea in relation to the sentences they have just written.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Write your sentence.
2) Copy down the sentences and put a number beside them as to what order they should be in.
3) Write sentences in paragraph form using legible handwriting.
4) Check your paragraph to see if it projects a single idea.
5) Read paper over for capitalization, punctuation, spelling and sentence structure.
6) Give paper to teacher.

V. EVALUATION

No grade. This is a practice lesson and can be used for the teacher to diagnose which children need more work in writing paragraphs and how much more they need.

TOPIC: Writing for Varieties of Audiences

Sharon D. Procter
Qualla Elementary
Sylva, NC
Grades 4-6

# IMAGINING DEAFNESS

## I. Rationale

A child delights in hearing his/her voice on a tape. This writing lesson includes such activities as a student recording his/her voice on tape, describing voices of fellow peers, imagining what it would be like to be deaf or blind, and writing an explanation of "sound" to a deaf person or an explanation of "sight" to a blind person.

This unit is designed to coerce students to use their imaginations; but, hopefully, it will also make them appreciate all of their senses and begin to use them to the fullest.

## II. Objectives

1) To have students listen to their own voices, paying attention to the sound of their voices
2) To give students the opportunity to use different types of media, such as the tape recorder
3) To have students use their imaginations
4) To develop a sense of importance for using descriptive words to all people, including the deaf and blind
5) To give students practice in the writing process

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Instruct students to record their voice on tape.
2) Instruct students to be alert to sound of voices around them
   a) List words that might describe a fellow classmate's voice
   b) Examples of words might include:
      1) high
      2) scratchy
      3) nasal
      4) soft
      5) whiny
      6) squeaky
      7) weak
      8) gruff
      9) without expression
      10) mumbly
      11) friendly
      12) clear
      13) sensitive
      14) calm
3) As a pre-writing experience have students choose partners for these activities:
   a) One student is blindfolded while the other student describes in detail a chosen object or scene. The "blind" student tries to guess what is being described. If the object/scene can't be identified, more details must be given.
   b) One student covers his ears while the other student writes a description of a sound made in the classroom. The "deaf" student tries to guess the sound. The writer gives descriptions until the sound is identified.

4) Instruct students that they will have to write on the following topics:
   a) "How you might explain the idea of sound to a deaf person," and
   b) "Which would be worse for you, blindness or deafness?" (Think about things you want to do, things you like most, and things which are more important to you.)
5) After each paper has been written, divide the class into groups for the purpose of offering critical suggestions to fellow classmates.
6) Teacher will collect those papers that are to be sent to a deaf of blind person.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Student obtains tape from teacher:
   a) Each student will record his voice on the tape, repeating three times the following statement, "I am listening to myself."
   b) Give your name, school, grade, and teacher.
   c) Play tape back and answer the following questions:
      1) Can your voice be easily heard?
      2) Does your voice sound too fast, slow, choppy, or smooth?
      3) What do you like about your voice?
      4) What can you tell about how a person feels inside by the tone of his/her voice?
2) Students participate in the pre-writing experience.
3) Student will have to write on the topic, "Explaining the Sounds to a Deaf Person."
4) Student will write on "Which Would be Worse for You, Blindness or Deafness?"
5) Students will divide into groups for purpose of offering suggestions for revision.
6) Students will hand in papers that are to be sent to a deaf or blind person, if possible and appropriate.

V. Evaluation

There will be no formal evaluation of these activities, simply because they are designed to make students use their imaginations. A teacher may wish to comment on each student's effort by talking to him/her individually.

TOPIC: Writing for Varieties of Audiences

Lynn Beckom
H. M. Arndt Middle School
Hickory, NC

# WHO WILL READ WHAT YOU WRITE?

## I. Rationale

Before an author writes, he/she must decide on the audience. Will he/she write for children, housewives, auto racing fans, CB'ers, teenagers, or salesmen? The subject, content, language, and length will be determined by this choice of audience. Although some articles may have general appeal to a wide audience, many are highly specialized and limited in their audience appeal.

Skill in selecting subject matter, form, style, and diction appropriate to a given audience can be learned through guided practice. The two class hours spent on this activity make a good beginning in this area of writing "know-how."

## II. Objectives

1) To be aware of the many different audiences to whom the author can direct writing
2) To adapt writing for older teenagers to an audience of third and fourth graders
3) To create writing with a definite audience in mind.

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) In the pre-writing stage discuss with the group and list on the chalkboard as many different audiences as you can. Consider age, sex, vocational, and avocational groups. Encourage students to copy this list.
2) Give students a previously duplicated writing aimed at older teenagers about career plans and choices.
3) Instruct students to rewrite the article for 3rd and 4th graders.
4) Assign students to write a letter to a relative of their own age about an exciting sports event. Then consider what changes in wording or style they would make if the letter were being sent to their grandparents.
5) Circulate among the students and assist them as needed.
6) Collect the finished work.
7) Provide time for sharing with the class both student and teacher readings of their work. Encourage discussion of strengths and weaknesses shown in the writings.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Participate in group discussion listing various possible audiences for whom we write.
2) Rewrite the older teenager paper on careers for 3rd and 4th grade children.
3) Write a letter to a brother, sister, cousin, or friend of about your own age about an exciting sports event. Then consider and make note of any changes in wording or style that you would make if the letter were directed to your grandfather or grandmother.
4) Turn in your assignment when finished.
5) During the sharing time listen to the readings. Be prepared to point out strengths and weaknesses of papers which relate to how appropriate they are for a given audience.

V. Evaluation

Allow about ten minutes for students to list as many different audiences as they can. Let students rate themselves A, B, or C for their participation in this entire activity. Encourage them to comment on the self-evaluation. The teacher may make an evaluation based on these student papers.

TOPIC: Writing for Varieties of Audiences

Joanne S. Stout
Winter Park School
Wilmington, NC 28401
Grade 4

# CREATING A FILMSTRIP STORY

## I. Rationale

Students enjoy viewing filmstrips and can derive much pleasure from creating their own. Preparing an accompanying cassette tape adds to the pleasure. In this activity the students will write a short story suitable for a kindergarten or first grade class, then make a filmstrip depicting the events of the story. The story will be taped, and the filmstrip and tape will be used for the enjoyment of young children.

## II. Objectives

1) To practice using correct punctuation, capitalization, sentence development, paragraph development, and diction
2) To write a short composition with a beginning, a middle, and an end
3) To use good enunciation, pitch, and stress in oral language
4) To select a topic to write about with a specific audience in mind
5) To practice revision skills

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Discuss with students the types of stories young children enjoy.
2) Divide the class into groups of six.
3) Have each group decide on the subject matter to be used.
4) Have group select a recorder to jot down ideas to be developed.
5) Use brainstorming technique to get ideas.
6) Circulate among groups to give help and encouragement.
7) Have group organize and write first draft of story.
8) Read drafts and make suggestions.
9) Have groups exchange stories and give suggestions for revision.
10) Write final draft of story.
11) Provide for each group a filmstrip, (get old filmstrip from librarian and bleach with Clorox water), Sharpie pens, masking tape, and film guide.
12) Show students how to put filmstrip on film guide and tape to hold in place.
13) Direct students to draw pictures depicting the story on the filmstrip, keeping the art work simple.
14) Have students to record story on tape provided, using some sound to signal advancement of filmstrip (bell or wood block).
15) Have filmstrips viewed by class.
16) Have group members show their filmstrip to a kindergarten or first grade class.
17) Allow two weeks for the assignment.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Participate in discussion of stories young children enjoy.
2) Help your group decide on the subject matter for the story/filmstrip.
3) Select a recorder for the group.
4) Use brainstorming to get ideas for your story.
5) Organize ideas in sequential order for beginning, middle, and end.
6) Have two people work on each of the three parts to write the first draft.
7) Ask teacher for assistance if needed.
8) Exchange parts and read.
9) Offer suggestions for revision.
10) Write final draft.
11) Draw pictures on filmstrip which will illustrate your story.
12) Record story on tape using a definite sound (snap finger, ring bell, hit wood block) to indicate advancement of the filmstrip.
13) Show finished product to class.
14) Show finished product to a kindergarten or first grade class and then perhaps donate it to your library.
15) Drawing of filmstrip may be done in free time as well as class time.

V. Evaluation

The activity will be evaluated on the basis of its appeal to the young audience viewing it. Members of the group producing the filmstrip and two other class members should observe audience reaction and decide on the measure of success. The teacher would give a grade with the lesson objectives in mind.

TOPIC: Writing for Varieties of Audiences

Vickie Rose
South Hoke School
Raeford, NC
Grades 3-4

# MORAL DILEMMA AS A WRITING STIMULUS

## I. Rationale

Very often children have to make decisions which, to them, seem very important. By asking them to solve a moral dilemma, the teacher is offering a situation which demands that the child use what he/she has learned about right and wrong. Moral dilemmas allow the self-conscious to emerge. The purpose of this writing task is to present a moral dilemma for a child to solve.

## II. Objectives

1) To learn the term "moral dilemma"
2) To form an opinion
3) To interact verbally and emotionally
4) To experience an opportunity to solve a moral dilemma
5) To practice basic writing skills

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Lead students to understand the term "Moral dilemma" by examples such as: Mary felt a strong sense of excitement as she looked through the store window. She saw her mother pick out a beautiful pink dress but could think of no occasion for gifts. Mary's mother did not see her looking through the window. Mary thinks, "Maybe I'll just go right in and ask her what the dress is for." What should Mary do?
2) Lead students into a discussion of the above dilemma.
3) Use children's own experiences in discussion of a dilemma.
4) Set a limit of 500-600 words for each child to write about a true dilemma (the teacher may have to aid the student in recalling such an event).
5) Allow five days for the completion of this assignment.
6) Have children edit their papers.
7) Collect all work at the end of the assignment.

## IV. Procedure for Students

1) Understand the meaning of "moral dilemma."
2) Discuss with the class any personal dilemmas.
3) Develop a rough draft of a dilemma he/she or a friend has experienced.
4) Have the paper edited and prepare a final draft.
5) Submit all work to the teacher on the specific day.

## V. Evaluation

One letter grade will be given for mechanics and coherence of work.

TOPIC: Writing for Varieties of Audiences

Becky Anderson
Flat Rock Elementary
Mt. Airy, NC
Grade 4

# DEAR HANNAH COLUMN

## I. Rationale

We live in a world of change. Many of the cherished customs and ideas of the past are no longer relevant today. By asking students to help solve problems that other students have is giving them a relevant task, as well as a sense of responsibility. By publishing students' writings in the school newspaper, a purpose for writing is provided.

## II. Objectives

1) To be able to write a creative solution to a real problem
2) To learn to think and write with a reasonable degree of critical skill
3) To practice basic writing skills
4) To aid in problem solving
5) To develop a better understanding of problems faced by other students

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) As a group activity, select four students to form a panel. Let classmates share problems for the panel to help solve. The teacher may tell an imaginary problem a child may face, to get the discussion moving. (For example--One student is upset because he/she has to go to bed at 8:00 each night, when his/her friends are allowed to stay up until 9:00. What's wrong with his/her parents?)
2) Change panel membership frequently.
3) After panel, lead discussion about Dear Abby column in the newspaper.
4) Ask if they would like to be Dear Abby for a paper.
5) Explain that two students per week will be selected to be "Dear Hannah" for the school paper, to answer problem questions submitted by any student within the school. (Alternatives--for class newspaper, do learning center where teacher makes up imaginary questions.)

## IV. Procedure for Students

1) Participate in panel and/or asking problem questions.
2) Discuss Dear Abby column in the newspaper.
3) Listen as teacher explains Dear Hannah column in school newspaper.

4) Be prepared to answer questions submitted by any student in school for the Dear Hannah column.

V. Evaluation

Teacher will note progress made by students in problem solving, logical thinking, mechanical skills, revision, and written expression.

TOPIC: Writing for Varieties of Audiences

Linda Slager
Peabody School
Wilmington, NC 28401
Grade 5

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN . . .

## I. Rationale

Students at the 4-6 grade level can begin to be aware of differences in word usage, style, and content in writing, depending on the audience. In this exercise the effect of the language used is especially important because the writer attempts to persuade his/her readers of something. To make this exercise relevant for the student, he/she will choose a topic of environmental concern and write two letters of persuasion--one to his/her peers and one to the adult community.

## II. Objectives

1) To learn to choose words and alter style and content according to the audience
2) To use ideas and language persuasively
3) To practice writing skills of sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Initiate a discussion of writing for different audiences with persuasive role-playing. For example, one student tries to persuade another to go to the beach (park, swimming pool, zoo, fishing, grocery store, church, etc.) with him/her. Then the same student tries the persuasion on another who is playing the role of a parent or other adult.
2) After trying several situations encourage students to discuss differences they saw in approach and language, depending on the audience.
3) Change the emphasis of persuasion to some specific environmental concerns. Suggestions include the problem of litter, recycling paper or aluminum, protection of wildlife, conservation of fuel, conservation of electricity, or anything else of this nature that has been previously discussed in school.
4) Let students choose a topic (above) with which they feel comfortable.
5) Review letter-writing form.
6) Instruct students to write two persuasive letters on the topic--one to their peers and one to adults.
7) Allow class time for writing.
8) Arrange for student editing groups of three or four to read each other's letters and make suggestions regarding audience appeal and mechanics of writing.
9) Allow time for revision after peer editing.

10) Read and evaluate the letters.
11) For feedback on effect let students who wish to take or send their letters to other classes in the school.
12) Let students take the adult-oriented letters home for their parents to read and comment upon regarding effect.
13) If possible, send one or two letters to the editor of the local newspaper for publication.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Participate in role-playing and class discussion of writing for different audiences.
2) Choose an environmental issue for a persuasive letter.
3) Write one letter of persuasion to schoolmates and another letter on the same topic to adults.
4) Let two or three other students read your letters and listen to any suggestions they have.
5) Revise the letters for audience appeal and punctuation, capitalization, grammar, and spelling.
6) Give letters to the teacher for reading.
7) "Try out" the letters on other children and adults.

V. Evaluation

The student may evaluate the effectiveness of each of his/her letters through feedback from the readers of them.

The teacher may want to evaluate the letters for style and word usage as they relate to the different audiences. Improvement in basic writing skills might also be evaluated by the teacher.

TOPIC: Writing Reports, Reviews, Arguments and Descriptions

Sharon D. Procter
Qualla Elementary
Sylva, NC
Grades 4-6

# ANIMATING WRITING

## I. Rationale

Most children enjoy writing, if the task is related to their own experiences. Telling a child to simply "write a report" seems erroneous. But, if the teacher allows for some types of experiences, the task of reporting becomes personal and meaningful.

The following assignment is designed to give students many experiences with animals and/or insects to give them opportunities for writing; and, finally, to research and report on one animal or insect.

## II. Objectives

1) To allow students to observe by touching, looking at and listening to different animals and/or insects
2) To give students access to the use of many different reference materials
3) To allow students to practice summarizing material
4) To develop a sense of sequencing events in reporting
5) To develop more confidence in speaking orally

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Provide experiences for students in one or more of the following ways:
   a) Visiting a zoo
   b) Permitting students to bring animals to school (teacher limiting the number brought)
   c) Taking students on a walk to find different types of animals or insects (this will help those who do not have pets of their own).
2) Allow at least one week for students to bring animals to school.
3) At the beginning of this week, the teacher will lead a discussion in:
   a) The importance of using reference sources for locating information (discuss different types)
   b) The importance of summarizing ideas and thoughts into one's own words
   c) The importance of writing ideas in sequential order.
4) The teacher may use the following techniques to give students practice in summarizing, sequential order, and writing:
   a) Teacher prepares a shortened report of some animal, insect, etc., which includes type of birth, habitat, characteristics, etc.

b) Teacher instructs students to listen closely as she reads either half, or all, of the selection. Then students are to write in their own words what was said.
c) This introductory activity may take as long as two days, if the teacher so desires.
d) Divide the class into groups for purpose of peer suggestions and rewriting.
e) Follow this same format for the week, using selections on different animals.
f) If the teacher feels students need extra practice in this type of activity, she may want to continue over into the next week.

5) Teacher will prepare students for writing and giving reports:
   a) Discuss the elements to be included in this report:
      1) Choose an animal or insect, etc.
      2) Title
      3) From 3 to 5 pages long
      4) Any drawings, or pictures, or charts.
   b) Instruct students to use only two reference sources for gathering information.
   c) Emphasize that using their own words is one of the most important elements, both in the written and oral reports.
   d) Students are to keep all work in a notebook (made by students).
   e) Discuss responsibility of the speaker:
      1) Speaks in a clear voice
      2) Is well prepared
      3) Speaks in own words
      4) Uses charts, pictures, or any other types of visuals to make report more interesting
      5) Asks for questions.
6) Tell students how long they have to write report.(One week or more. Teacher's discretion)
7) Periodically throughout the week, have students form their groups for the purpose of giving suggestions to fellow students.
8) As each student completes his/her report, the teacher may permit him/her to present his/her work.
9) Teacher will collect work for evaluation.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) If permitted, the student(s) will be responsible for bringing animals to school, upon the teacher's request and on designated days.
2) Students should participate in a walk for the purpose of finding animals or insects.
3) During the week of observation, students will observe closely any animal(s) brought to school (or those found on the school grounds).
4) Students will participate in the "listening and writing" exercise.
5) Students will divide into groups to offer critical suggestions to peers. (The number of times this takes place depends on the number of selections read by teacher.)
6) At the designated time, students will begin working on reports--choosing resources, summarizing what is read, and writing the report.

7) During the time students are working on their reports, they will periodically break up into their groups for critical suggestions. (Determined by teacher)
8) At completion of work, students will present their reports, orally and in their own words, making use of pictures, charts, drawings, other visual aids.
9) Students will hand in all work to the teacher for final evaluation.

V. Evaluation

A letter grade may be given for this type of activity. Some of the points to include in the evaluation might be: 1) use of student's words; 2) use of relevant resources; 3) the development of sequential ideas or facts; 4) the oral presentation; 5) effective use of visual aids to make the report more interesting.

TOPIC: Writing Reports, Reviews, Arguments and Descriptions

Linda Slager
Peabody School
Wilmington, NC 28401
Grade 5

# CLASS YEARBOOK

## I. Rationale

Near the end of the school year it is fun to look back and remind ourselves of the highlights of the year (and maybe even some low spots). A class yearbook is an effective way to encourage students to write stories, reports, and descriptions. Students are delighted to see in print accounts of funny things they did and said and eagerly devise articles of this nature. This is especially useful as an activity for the last two weeks of school, with distribution of the yearbooks on the last day insuring some valuable quiet time.

## II. Objectives

1) To record the year's highlights
2) To build positive self concepts from the realization that one's actions and sayings are interesting and important to others
3) To practice narrative and descriptive writing
4) To practice organization and basic writing skills

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) In preparation for the yearbook, recall some of the highlights of the year. Possibilities include favorite class activities, field trips, contests, parties, projects, and funny situations. It is a good practice to keep a running written record throughout the year of funny things the kids do and say.
2) Begin a discussion of the students' best memories of the year, reminding them of things if they have difficulty remembering.
3) List recollections on chalkboard as they are mentioned.
4) Introduce the idea of a class yearbook and lead a class discussion on the kinds of things to include in a yearbook.
5) Use the list of recollections on the board as topics for writing and arrange for the selection of topics. It is important that each student have a different topic, so that his composition is certain to be printed. Of course some students will want the same topic and an impartial method of dealing with this will have to be used. (Hint: Kids like the "Pick a number between 1 and 25" solution.)
6) Create special assignments for any students with very limited writing ability. For example, they could be in charge of a page that is a collection of words or phrases that follow the title "Remember . . ." and are meaningful to the class.

7) Review the basic elements of narrative and descriptive writing before students begin to write.
8) Allow class time for composition, offering help when needed
9) Set up a conference with each student to work on editing together.
10) Allow class time for revision, as well as drawings, a cover page, and any other extras that students wish to include in the book.
11) When all entries have been revised and submitted, compile and transfer to duplicating masters. Half of an 8 1/2" x 11" sheet is a convenient size for the yearbook. Be sure to leave some open spaces or empty pages for autographs.
12) Have students collate and staple the book pages on the last day.
13) Distribute a finished book to each class member.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Participate in the class discussion of the year's highlights and the making of a yearbook.
2) Choose one of the topics on which to write an article for the yearbook.
3) Write the article, using words and style that will make interesting reading.
4) Confer with the teacher for editing suggestions.
5) Revise the article.
6) Submit the composition for publication in the yearbook.
7) Read the finished product and remember that the year wasn't so bad after all.

V. Evaluation

The teacher may want to evaluate the composition for improvement in form, content and mechanics as part of the final language arts evaluation.

TOPIC: Writing Reports, Reviews, Arguments and Descriptions

Becky Anderson
Flat Rock Elementary
Mt. Airy, NC
Grade 4

# KNOCK! KNOCK! WHO IS IT?

## I. Rationale

One of the major problems of teachers is how to present material in a manner so relevant to students that they understand its worth from the moment of presentation. One answer is to use learning centers which uses techniques to motivate, individualize and get the children involved in a creative experience. By providing a variety of activities for the children to choose from, the results will be a beautiful, expressive, and generally very effective description of themselves.

## II. Objectives

1) To develop an understanding of one's self
2) To practice basic writing skills (capitalization, sentence development, punctuation, spelling)
3) To encourage children to write descriptively about themselves and others
4) To choose, explore, and experiment with a variety of activities in the learning center
5) To revise rough draft as necessary for final form

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Teacher should make all of the following activities (except Activity A) and place in center. All art materials, crystal ball, and VIP (Very Important Person) box should also be included.
The eye-catching door with a knocker should be placed on the bulletin board at the center, with the caption "Knock! Knock! Who Is It," over it.

Activity A - Students
Have each child write a description of another child. The description should include five clues. Then the composition is read to the rest of the children, who try to guess whom he/she is describing.

Activity B
Have each child write about himself/herself--physical appearance, likes, dislikes, hobbies, etc.--with his/her name written only on the back of the paper. The descriptions are then read and posted on the bulletin board. Only when the children have exhausted all possibilities may they peek to see who it is. (You could include a crystal ball you and the children can look into to learn more about themselves.)

Activity C

Secure a cardboard refrigerator box and place in the center. Make a door in the box large enough for a student to enter, and place a chair inside the box. On the door in big letters put V.I.P.

When introducing the center, lead a group discussion about autobiographies. Instruct students to write an autobiography, including elements from their past, present, and future life. The writing can be done in the V.I.P. room.

Provide art supplies for students to use to create a self portrait. Portraits can be autographed and pasted on the wall in the V.I.P. room.

Activity D

Ask children to imagine how they looked as babies, then draw a self-portrait. Then tell them to write a sentence or paragraph describing what they were doing. Have the children imagine how they will look when they get their first job, then draw a picture. They should describe in a paragraph the kind of work they are doing. (Accompany with the reading of a poem. For example, "When I Grow Up" by William Wise)

Activity E

Ask the class to interview their parents to answer the following questions about themselves:

Where was I born?

What kind of day or night was it?

What was my favorite toy as a baby?

Did I ever have any accidents or get hurt in some way? At what age?

Did I ever visit any interesting places?

Add any other information you wish. Bring a baby snapshot of yourself to school.

(Follow-up activity - make a class notebook with the snapshots and stories)

Activity F

With the help of the teacher and other students, have the class make a "me" mobile--a silhouette of the head (profile), then an outline of the hands and feet. Ask each child to write a story about himself/herself, telling what his/her hands and feet do for him/her. Have the children finish their stories by writing what their heads do for them. Attach the parts, including the story, to a hanger, string, and sticks, mobile fashion.

Activity G

On ditto stencils draw six circles. The students are to draw the expression on their faces when the event written under the circle occurs. (For example - A babysitter is coming; My puppy is lost; I have opened a present I like; etc.)

Activity H

On ditto stencils have students complete blanks about their favorite people, places, or things and tell why. (Example - My favorite friend is _____ because _____. You can include T.V. program, food, sport, book, song, movie, color, animal, etc.)

2) Teacher introduces center by doing activity #1
3) Pass out direction sheet for students to check off activity as each one is completed.
Example:

| | Completed | Student Comment |
|---|---|---|
| Activity A | | |
| Activity B | | |
| Activity C | | |

4) Lead class discussion on personality, emotions, and autobiography.
5) Go over each activity in class.
6) Pass out folder for each child to keep direction sheet and place work in.
7) Place editorial box in center. Explain to students that their first draft is to be placed in this box. They choose another student to help edit the first draft.
8) Read and evaluate final work turned in.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Write description of another student.
2) Read composition to the rest of the class who try to guess who is being described.
3) Check off Activity A as completed and make comment on Direction Sheet.
4) Participate in class discussion about personality, emotions, and autobiography.
5) Listen to teacher explain all center work. Ask questions or give comments.
6) Place Activity A and Direction Sheet in folder.
7) When first draft is completed of any activity, place in editorial box. Go over with editor. Then prepare final draft to submit to teacher.

V. Evaluation

No paper will be letter graded or marked. When the child has written his/her first draft, he/she will place it in the editorial box. At some time during the day one of the class editors will go over the paper with the student, making corrections and preparing it for final draft. Then the author copies the creation in his best handwriting and as neatly as possible and turns into the teacher. On a diagnostic sheet the teacher places a check by both the editor's name and the author's name if there were mistakes in punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, or spelling, to indicate that this is an area in which both of these students needed help.

TOPIC: Writing Reports, Reviews, Arguments and Descriptions

Vickie Rose
South Hoke School
Raeford, NC
Grades 3-4

# A FIELD TRIP AS A WRITING STIMULUS

## I. Rationale

Children love to take field trips and can learn much from them. By taking children on a field trip, the teacher can begin to make a relevant assignment. By asking them to describe the trip, the teacher is offering a reason to write. She is also helping them to sharpen their sense of awareness. The purpose for this writing assignment is to help sharpen that awareness and recall details of a field trip.

## II. Objectives

1) To have an experience away from home and away from school
2) To sharpen awareness and recall details and events in order
3) To develop and practice basic skills of writing

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Choose a site for a field trip that relates to a topic of study (for example, a science unit on the stars and planets; a field trip could be planned to a nearby planetarium).
2) Study the unit and discuss it thoroughly
3) Have extra books available on this subject for free reading time
4) Go on the field trip. Children should know that they will be expected to write about their experiences.
5) Discuss the writing assignment with the children. They may be asked to describe the entire trip or certain portions of it.
6) Allow three days for completion of the assignment. (This includes editing and rewriting.)
7) Read and evaluate the finished product.

## IV. Procedure for Students

1) Study and discuss the unit.
2) Read extra books on the subject.
3) After taking the field trip, write a description of the trip (in its entirety or in part).
4) Have the paper edited and make corrections.
5) Prepare the final draft and submit all work to the teacher on the specified date.

## V. Evaluation

Two grades will be given: One for mechanics of writing, and a second for sequence of events and composition.

TOPIC: Writing Reports, Reviews, Arguments and Descriptions

Rachel Cox
Pinewood School
Mt. Holly, NC
Grade 4

# SAYING WHAT I SEE

## I. Rationale

To be successful in writing, students need to build a vocabulary which will enable them to better present any desired thought.

Through seeing, feeling, and examining works of famous painters, and by describing these pictures in their own language, the students can become aware of their ability to think and express their thoughts in written form.

## II. Objectives

1) To intensify insight and imagery
2) To find satisfaction in accomplishment
3) To express self
4) To learn to look for significant detail and be able to write about it in an interesting way

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Have several paintings by well known painters such as Sunflowers, by Van Gogh; John F. Kennedy, by Norman Rockwell; Three Musicians, by Picasso; A Gorgeous Autumn, by Arnegger. Paintings should be large enough to be seen easily by all of the class, or if transparencies of such paintings are available, use the overhead projector.
2) Show Van Gogh painting first and instruct students to look at it closely so as to describe what they see in detail. Encourage responses though they are inaccurate or nonsensical.
3) After students comment, give the name and some details of the painting, painter, and his style.
4) Show the Picasso or Rockwell, etc., in the same manner.
5) The Arnegger is a pastoral scene and any similar painting would probably do as well.
6) Have children choose one of the paintings and write a description.
7) Display the paintings in the chalk tray.
8) Suggest with questions what they might write about the paintings, and request them not to use such phrases as "in this picture," or "this picture shows."
   Example: "What might the painter have been thinking?"
   "How does the painting make you feel?"
9) Move about the room as the children write so as to answer questions or suggest grammatical corrections as needed.

10) Allow students to examine painting as closely and often as they desire.
11) Collect all papers when completed.
12) Redistribute the compositions among the students to be read and commented upon.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Examine paintings as teacher shows them to class.
2) Think about how the pictures make you feel; what the painters were trying to express.
3) Write your feelings about the picture of your choice.
4) Ask questions of the teacher if so desired.
5) Turn in papers when finished.
6) Study classmate's composition and the picture of his choice. Write to say you agree or disagree with the writer's interpretation and why. Return the paper to the teacher.

V. Evaluation

All interpretations will be accepted. Teacher will write a comment concerning neatness, form, or improvement in observation and use of vocabulary in describing the painting.

TOPIC: Writing Reports, Reviews, Arguments and Descriptions

Sharon D. Procter
Qualla Elementary
Sylva, NC
Grades 4-6

# SUNWICH DIRECTIONS

## I. Rationale

Children need to have the experience of writing, giving, and following directions. This type of communication is an everyday part of any student's life.

One way to accomplish this is to have each student describe the steps in making a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, and give them the opportunity to experience written directions.

## II. Objectives

1) To give students practice in writing specific directions
2) To stress the importance of writing specific directions
3) To stress importance of writing directions in sequential order
4) To give students an experience in following directions

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Teacher can provide bread, peanut butter, jelly, knife, and spoon for exercise (or have students bring the items).
2) Assign each student the task of writing out directions for making a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.
3) Divide class into four or five groups:
   a) Instruct groups to choose a chairman and co-chairman.
4) After each group has completed one copy of directions, the teacher has all students gather at a central place.
5) Assign one group at a time to read their directions and make a sandwich from those directions.
6) Continue this activity until all groups have participated.

## IV. Procedure for Students

1) Each student will write out his directions for making the sandwich.
2) After dividing into working groups, students will choose a chairman and co-chairman:
   a) The chairman and co-chairman will read all students' directions and take the best from each
   b) The chairman will then recopy the directions
   c) These two people will share the responsibility of reading the directions aloud and following them exactly as stated.
3) Students will gather at a central place:
   a) Following the written directions of that particular group, one group will begin the task of making a sandwich
   b) All groups will participate in the activity.
4) Students will have the pleasure of eating a delicious peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

## V. Evaluation

This activity is primarily designed to make students aware of the importance of writing specific directions. It is also an interesting method to introduce an extended unit on following directions. Therefore, no evaluation will be given for this activity.

TOPIC: Writing Reports, Reviews, Arguments and Descriptions

Linda Slager
Peabody School
Wilmington, NC 28401
Grade 5

# SPORTS REPORTING

## I. Rationale

Sports events are a part of the experience of most children, either through direct involvement or watching, and can be exciting stimuli for descriptive composition. Reporting a sports event as a written news item promotes the development of organization skills, as well as the creation of clear and interesting descriptions.

## II. Objectives

1) To learn to describe action
2) To develop skill in recording sequence of events
3) To learn to differentiate between relevant and irrelevant occurrences in describing a situation
4) To practice basic writing skills

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Lead a class discussion on sports reporting (kinds of things to report, descriptive reporting).
2) Select a game the class is familiar with (kickball, dodgeball, softball, etc.) and arrange for team play at recess time.
3) Two to four students at a time can be the reporters for a game (therefore, it would take several days to involve the entire class).
4) After the game, let the reporters write up their commentaries as soon as possible.
5) Allow time the next day for consultation and revision, paying particular attention to descriptive words and phrases.
6) Read and evaluate the composition.
7) Allow the student to tape record his/her commentary.
8) Play the "sportscast" to the class (with the author's permission).

## IV. Procedure for Students

1) Participate in class discussion on sports reporting.
2) Observe one class game, taking notes on highlights of the game.
3) The same day, use notes to prepare a written commentary on the game, describing the highlights in detail.
4) Show the rough draft to the teacher and ask for suggestions.
5) Revise the draft and give to the teacher.
6) "Broadcast" the final commentary on a tape recorder.
7) Listen to the sportscast.

V. Evaluation

The teacher will evaluate the paper for form, content, and mechanics, write positive responses on it, and discuss with the student one area needing improvement.

TOPIC: Writing Reports, Reviews, Arguments and Descriptions

Judy P. Whisnant
Claremont Elementary School
Claremont, NC
Grades 5-6

# CONDUCTING AND REPORTING ON INTERVIEWS

## I. Rationale

Interviews can be used effectively in promoting competence in both oral and written communication. In this exercise, students will be given practice in choosing relevant questions, public speaking, and in "digesting" gathered information for the purpose of reporting in written form.

## II. Objectives

1) To gain skill in distinguishing relevant from irrelevant material
2) To practice public speaking
3) To relate gathered information in written form

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Conduct class discussion of interviewing, asking students to relate their experience with viewing interviews on television.
2) Ask students to find and share examples of interview reporting (newspapers are a good source).
3) Arrange for a guest to visit the class (mayor, fireman, principal, etc.) and announce the forthcoming visit to the class.
4) Explain that the purpose will be to gather information relating primarily to the person's occupation.
5) Ask each student to write five questions.
6) Aid in helping each student select two relevant questions from his list, being careful to avoid duplication among class members.
7) Allow one class period for the interview.
8) Require each student to ask at least one of the prepared questions and take notes.
9) In the next class period, ask students to write a report of the interview.
10) Collect and evaluate work.

## IV. Procedure for Student

1) Participate in group discussion of the interviewing and reporting process.
2) Find and share examples of interview reporting in local newspapers.
3) Prepare five questions which might be used in the forthcoming interview.
4) With teacher assistance, select two of the five questions to be used in the interview.

5) Participate in the interview, asking at least one of the prepared questions.
6) Prepare a written report from information gathered during the interview.
7) Submit reports to teacher for evaluation.

V. Evaluation

Two grades will be given on this assignment. One will represent an evaluation of the preparatory process. The second will be derived from an assessment of the information in the written report.

TOPIC: Writing Reports, Reviews, Arguments and Descriptions

Esther Carver
Blue Ridge
Glenville, NC 28717
Grade 3

# WRITING A SIMPLE SCIENCE EXPERIMENT

## I. Rationale

This lesson will deal with functional writing--writing a report on a science experiment. Children need to have practice in different forms of writing by experiences. Science experiments are a process of chronological or time sequences of events taking place. Children need to learn how to put this time order of events in written form.

## II. Objectives

1) To practice writing a report
2) To practice observation techniques
3) To practice time order writing or chronological sequence writing
4) To practice taking notes in list form
5) To develop vocabulary

## III. Procedures for Teacher

1) Place four pieces of charcoal in a bowl. Mix in a jar six tablespoons of water, six tablespoons of salt, six tablespoons of bluing; add to this two tablespoons of ammonia along with a few drops of food coloring. Pour this mixture over the charcoal. After several hours crystals will grow.
2) Discuss with children the words charcoal, ammonia and crystals.
3) Put the above words on tagboard and leave on the table with the charcoal.
4) Discuss with the children that they will see a change take place, but it will take several hours.
5) Explain that they will write a report tomorrow on the experiment. They should make a list of what has so far been done so they can include it in their report.
6) Discuss with the children what is meant by time order or chronological order. They will be writing down what happens in the order of its happening. You can also use the term sequence in the discussion.
7) Have reports written on the second day. Explain again to the children that their papers must show that things happen in a set order.
8) Check papers and do a follow-up on them the third day.

## IV. Procedure for Students

1) Make a list of how the experiment began. This is done so you will remember what to put in your report the next day.
2) Make observation from time to time of the experiment.

3) Discuss the experiment with other students.
4) Write the report.
5) Make sure you put report in time order or sequencing.
6) Use correct sentence structure.
7) Check paper over for any corrections you may want to make before turning it in.

V. Evaluation

This lesson is for diagnosis of childrens' ability to do report writing. Teacher will know which children will need more help in time order writing through this lesson.

TOPIC: Writing Reports, Reviews, Arguments and Descriptions

Jacqueline Gladrey
Scurlock School
Raeford, NC
Grade 4

# PICTURES MOTIVATE WORDS

## I. Rationale

Pictures can inspire words and spur the imaginations of students in their writing assignments. Selecting a few vivid pictures or photographs that can be shown on an overhead projector will serve to motivate many writing assignments.

The utilization of visual aids will encourage the student to write descriptive paragraphs in order to express themselves. Elaborating on the pictures will help students to develop their topic sentences.

The student will view many pictures, and will be asked to identify the most important idea found in the picture.

## II. Objectives

1) To gather and compare information found in a picture
2) To aid in developing the ability to point out the main idea of the picture
3) To become aware of visual aids in stimulating interest

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Select periodicals with prize winning photographs.
2) Select at least four pictures: two showing scenes in a rural area, and two showing damage to a large city.
3) Make transparencies for viewing with overhead projector.
4) Project the transparencies picturing the damage inflicted in the city.

## IV. Procedure for Students

1) Let all students point out details peculiar to a large city: example - shattered windows, cars overturned, etc.
2) Students will take notes on all details discussed.
3) Divide students into groups and allow them to examine pictures together.
4) Compare notes and discuss main topic of picture.
5) Write a descriptive paragraph, explaining the picture.
6) The student will proofread his first copy and turn in final draft (both copies turned in).

## V. Evaluation

Two grades will be given, one for the effort put into the paper and one on descriptive content of the paper.

TOPIC: Writing Creatively

Cindy Davis
Riverview Elementary
Creston, NC
Grades 4-6

# AWARD DAY!

## I. Rationale

It is much easier for children to respond creatively when they are the center of attention. Students are encouraged to write about their talents, or a talent they would like to possess, through an "Award Day" in class. Sometimes this is hard for students, because they tend to think there is nothing they can do. Through this creative activity, students are allowed to possess any ability they desire. The teacher may use this lesson to gain insight into the students' self-concepts, and then to develop writing skills in using more than one idea in a composition.

## II. Objectives

1) To develop a responsive attitude toward writing
2) To recognize positive characteristics about one's self
3) To practice using more than one idea in a composition
4) To review the rules of capitalization and punctuation

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Make or buy awards to present to the class on "Award Day." The awards may be ribbons, certificates, metals, or tokens. Students can make these an art project, but it is better if the teacher presents them as a total surprise to the students.
2) Declare a class "Award Day" calling great attention to the worth of each student in class. Present each student an award that he/she may wear for that class or day.
3) A pre-writing experience can be a discussion about types of awards and how people get them. Allow children to mention several people, but the teacher should make a point of mentioning "unimportant" people who have achieved but haven't been recognized publicly. Stress the fact that everyone has a trait or talent that deserves attention.
4) After stirring conversation, ask the students to write a composition about two or more talents, activities, or traits they have or would like to have for this award. Encourage students to write creatively about their award (make it a funny, mysterious, romantic, or poetic one).
5) Show with chalk and board, center activity, or charts how a composition of more than one idea is organized. (Topic sentence, supporting details, conclusion, transition words are skills to emphasize in teaching this.)

6) Make this a one day assignment, helping students at necessary points and allowing them to share their completed compositions. No formal editing is recommended, otner than pointing out in conferences with the students the transition from one paragraph to another. Some may need revision.
7) Post their compositions, along with the award, in the classroom or hall.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Take part in the discussion about awards and why people get them.
2) Think of two or more events, characteristics, or talents to write about in the composition. These can be important, very common, or totally make-believe. Don't be modest. This is not a bragging lesson, but a chance to look at one's self in a creative attitude.
3) Write the composition, concentrating on the transition from one paragraph to another. Keep in mind the mechanics of writing, such as capitalization, punctuation, and format.
4) Share the finished paper in class or with the teacher in conference.

V. Evaluation

Teacher judgment is used to evaluate effort in creative ability. A grade can be given for format of a composition and mechanical performance.

TOPIC: Writing Creatively

Judy P. Whisnant
Claremont Elementary
Claremont, NC
Grades 5-6

# OCCUPATIONAL MIME

## I. Rationale

The creativity of many students oftentimes remains dormant unless aroused by the proper stimulus. Mime exercises can be used effectively in providing the necessary "prod" needed by the child who complains "I can't think of anything to write." In this activity mime exercises serve as a pre-writing experience to forthcoming creative composition. Since each child has some association with the world of work, any occupation to which the child can relate may be used for the exercise.

## II. Objectives

1) To practice creative composition
2) To participate in visual, oral, and written communication
3) To practice various means of character development in creative composition

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Ask the students to think of some job or occupation which they can act out. (Examples: typist, boxer, hairdresser, dentist, ditch digger.)
2) Ask a student to pantomime his occupation as class members attempt to guess what it is.
3) After the student's occupation has been identified, ask the student to continue the pantomime by giving an emotion or quality to his character. (Example: "Now be an angry dentist," or "Now be a tired ditch digger.")
4) After all (or the desired number) have presented their pantomimes, ask students to create a story or poem about their characters, employing the emotions or qualities portrayed in the pantomime.
5) Allow two days for the completion of the rough draft.
6) Divide the class into groups of four to six students for the purpose of reading one another's work, sharing any suggestions on making the character more "alive."
7) Allow a class period for revision.
8) Collect and evaluate the completed work.

## IV. Procedure for Students

1) Select a job or occupation which you would like to act out.
2) Pantomime the occupation when called upon, allowing classmates to guess.

3) Respond to teacher suggestions by giving an emotion or quality to the character.
4) Write a story or poem centering on the character portrayed in the mime exercise.
5) Join a group of four to six students and share work, giving any suggestions for making the characters in the various compositions "come alive."
6) Revise if necessary and submit to teacher.

V. Evaluation

This exercise will receive one grade based on teacher evaluation of the vividness of the characterization. Mechanics will not enter into the grading of this creative work.

TOPIC: Writing Creatively

Linda Slager
Peabody School
Wilmington, NC 28401
Grade 5

# IF THINGS WERE DIFFERENT . . .

## I. Rationale

Children's imaginative powers seem to vary greatly, especially when they are asked to write. But thinking about how they would like to change themselves or their surroundings for a day (without limitations) seems to stimulate even most reluctant imaginations.

## II. Objectives

1) To think about surroundings, daily routine, and self
2) To develop self-expression
3) To practice basic writing skills

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Lead a 5-10 minute discussion of pleasing alternatives to the students' normal routines (could include such things as the school day, the community, the world--even themselves). Ask such questions as, "If you could change yourself (your school, etc.) for one whole day, what would you change?"
2) When students are responding well orally, ask them to plan a "perfect day" and describe in writing what that day would be like.
3) Allow time in class for writing with consultation when requested.
4) Have conferences the next day for the purpose of editing the rough draft.
5) Allow one more day for revision.
6) Read and evaluate the papers.
7) Let those students who so desire read their works to the class. Others may want them posted on a bulletin board for class reading.

## IV. Procedure for Students

1) Participate in class discussion of "If things were different . . ."
2) Plan a perfect day for yourself and describe it in writing.
3) Have a conference with the teacher the next day about the rough draft.
4) Revise the paper and submit to the teacher.

## V. Evaluation

The teacher will write positive comments on the composition and point out to the student one area (in form, content, or mechanics) that should be improved. Follow-up practice in that area would be ideal and could be evaluated for improvement.

TOPIC: Writing Creatively

Joanne S. Stout
Winter Park School
Wilmington, NC 28401
Grade 4

# EXPLORING ECOLOGY WITH COMPOSITIONS

## I. Rationale

To encourage youngsters to write we must provide them with some experiences to make them want to write. By studying endangered wildlife the teacher can get the student interested in trying to do something about the problem.

Students may watch television programs such as "Wild Kingdom" and discuss the program at school. Pictures of endangered species can be displayed and books about these animals can be put on a reading table.

After the students have been exposed to the topic for several days they may be asked to write a letter pretending that they are the last of their species. The letter should convince people on earth to save them.

## II. Objectives

1) To practice acceptable spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and usage in letter form.
2) To organize writing using the concepts of time and cause-effect relationships.
3) To develop the habit of revising written composition.
4) To develop an awareness for the need to protect endangered species.

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Assign students to watch one episode of "Wild Kingdom."
2) Discuss the program which the students have watched.
3) Encourage students to read books on endangered species.
4) Use ecology filmstrips if available to develop visual and listening skills.
5) Using textbook material and chalkboard or overhead projector with transparency, teach the elements of an acceptable letter form.
6) Review punctuation used in letter writing.
7) Have letters written.
8) Divide class into groups of four or five to exchange letters and offer suggestions for revision.
9) Circulate among groups assisting students needing help.
10) Read and evaluate the finished letters.
11) Place letters in writing center for class members to enjoy.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Watch "Wild Kingdom" on television, paying attention to the reasons presented that cause certain animals to be in danger of becoming extinct.
2) Participate in class discussion of the program.
3) Study the correct letter form presented by the teacher.
4) Write first draft of letter.
5) Divide into small groups.
6) Exchange letters within your groups and read, offering suggestions for revision.
7) Write final draft and give to teacher.

V. Evaluation

Grade will reflect proper use of mechanics and correct letter form. Contributions to class discussion will also be considered.

TOPIC: Writing Creatively

Judy Walls
Silk Hope Elementary
Siler City, NC
Grade 4

# GHOST STORIES

## I. Rationale

All children love to read and hear ghost stories. This is a good end-of-the-year project to keep students interested. They can let their imaginations run away with them.

## II. Objectives

1) To be able to write a story with a beginning, middle, and end
2) To show an improvement in using descriptive words and phrases
3) To improve in paragraph development
4) To develop use of imagination

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Get ghost story books from the library for free reading.
2) To create the right atmosphere for telling or writing ghost stories, choose a rainy or dreary day on which to begin.
3) Close the blinds in the room and have the children sit in the darkest corner or find a dark spot in the building such as the stage.
4) If the stage is used, close the curtains and leave a crack of light to read by.
5) The teacher makes her voice as dramatic as possible. This adds to the overall effect.
6) Read several ghost stories over a 2-3 day period.
7) Creative dramatics is a very exciting way to get childrens' imaginations going.
8) Suggest a situation such as this: Two children are out exploring and find a hidden cave. They go inside even though they know that there is a legend that the cave is haunted by the ghost of a murderer. As they round a corner of the cave all of a sudden . . .
9) Pick a child to be the scared little boy and another to be the brave girl (or visa versa). Let them create the scene when they meet the ghost.
10) This can be done several times so different children can play parts. Only one day's writing period should be spent on this.
11) By the fifth day children should be ready to write their own ghost stories.
12) When they have finished, let some students read their stories to the class. Again, a setting can be staged by closing the blinds or going to the stage.
13) Take up papers and read and correct them.

14) Have children correct errors and rewrite.
15) Give them a reason for rewriting by telling them the class is going to put up a ghost bulletin board in the hall where other students can see and read their work. Stories displayed must be neat, correct, and well written.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Read ghost story books.
2) Think about a ghost story you'd like to write.
3) Participate in creative dramatics.
4) You may think up your own creative ghost play.
5) Write a scary, exciting story. Be sure it has a beginning, middle and end.
6) Read your story to the class.
7) Rewrite your story after the teacher has corrected it. Do your best writing and correct all errors so that your story may be chosen to go on the bulletin board.

V. Evaluation

Display stories on bulletin board.

# Grades 7~9

- Motivating Writing
- Writing for Varieties of Audiences
- Writing Reports, Reviews, Arguments
- Writing Creatively

TOPIC: Writing Creatively

Lynn Beckom
H. M. Arndt Middle School
Hickory, NC

# WRITE YOUR OWN MYTH

## I. Rationale

The students' reason to write is to demonstrate their understanding of what a myth is by creating and illustrating a myth of their own to explain a constellation in the sky, some natural phenomenon such as seasons, or something even more imaginative. After reading in mythology they might be able to add to it. These lessons provide opportunity to create stories or poems, to revise and improve them. Seven days are needed for this assignment.

## II. Objectives

1) To understand the purpose and structure of a myth by modeling
2) To combine writing and illustrating which produces a product suitable for display
3) To encourage the flow of imaginative and creative ideas
4) To experience re-writing and editing

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Assign students to write and illustrate one myth.
2) Introduce the assignment at the end of a mythology unit
3) Spend at least fifteen minutes discussing possible topics with the class. Then use chalkboard, overhead projector, or chart sheets to do a group writing of a simple example in prose or poetry form.
4) Place in the classroom for later use supplies of paper, paste, scissors, duplicated stars, etc., for the illustration which must be made to accompany the myth. Usually light colored paper is best so that the myth can be written directly on it and the illustration can be above, below, or surrounding it. Fineline pens may be used to connect stars to form a pattern, to make the story show up better for display on bulletin boards, or in a huge "Book of Myths."
5) Set one half page as a minimum and two pages as a maximum length.
6) Let students select their topic and think about ways to proceed.
7) Allow seven days for the entire assignment including the day of introduction and topic selection, one day (class period) for composing, one day for editing, one day for revising, one day for final draft, one day for illustrating, and one day for arranging bulletin board displays and compiling class "Book of Myths." Permit students to judge which ones are best by popular vote based on certain cooperatively listed criteria.

8) Divide the class into groups of 4-6 students who will read and edit one another's papers.
9) Require one other student to proofread the final draft.
10) Make yourself available daily for individual consultations as requested by students.
11) Move about your area to observe work in progress.
12) Collect, read, and evaluate the myths.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Review and recall some myths you have just read.
2) Select a topic for your myth.
3) Think about and talk to others about the plot of your story.
4) Decide whether to write poetry or prose.
5) Organize in your mind what your myth will be about and how you will show it visually.
6) Prepare a rough draft of the myth.
7) Rewrite your paper.
8) Submit your paper for proofreading to one other student.
9) Prepare your illustration and copy the myth onto it or cut out the myth and mount it upon the illustration.
10) Turn in finished work to teacher on the given day.

V. Evaluation

Teacher and students will grade these works. Both grades will be recorded. Student evaluation will consist of rating the myths on originality, adherence to subject, overall appearance, and appeal or effect using a point scale of 25 for each item. Teacher evaluation will be based on credit for content, form, style, spelling, diction, mechanics, and effort.

TOPIC: Writing Creatively

Ouida Hughes Bass
North Belmont Elementary School
Belmont, NC 28012
Grade 6

# WHAT DO YOU SAY?

## I. Rationale

Sight media appeal to children and are good ways to stimulate creative writing from conversation. This activity is designed to help children think of something to write and to lead them into writing about imaginary characters of their own creation. This activity is excellent to follow a teaching unit in the use of quotation marks.

## II. Objectives

1) To create written composition from filmed action
2) To show that words tell what people are saying
3) To translate physical actions into words
4) To develop one's communication skills
5) To reinforce punctuation--mechanics in use of quotation marks, specifically

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Choose a short film or film segment that is action-filled.
2) Carefully preview the film to choose portion best suited for supplying easy dialogue. (Western gunfight scenes, cartoons, animal stories are good.)
3) Use no sound with the film and try to imagine what dialogue could be written by your students when they view the action.
4) Before class session, write on the board some examples of conversation with correct placement of quotation marks and other punctuation.
5) Discuss at beginning of class session how the lesson will procede. Explain that the student will provide conversation to tell what happens in the film.
6) Tell students to use their own imaginations if they forget exactly how the action developed. (Children will write more freely if they understand that there is no "right" or "wrong" way to tell the action.)
7) Show film segment.
8) Provide opportunity for writing.

## IV. Procedure for Students

1) Watch the film carefully.
2) Record what you think the characters are saying.
3) Refer to examples on the board if you have forgotten punctuation.

V. Evaluation

1) Students rewrite during next class session.
2) Give more weight to creative, exciting use of words than to mechanics in judging student work.
3) Have students read aloud their work. (Sixth graders have a good sense of drama and will enjoy hearing how others recorded the action.)

TOPIC: Writing Creatively

Cindy Davis
Riverview Elementary
Creston, NC
Grades 4-6

# COMIC CAPER

## I. Rationale

Children of all ages relate to comic books as a source of reading and enjoyment. This lesson uses the comic book to stimulate creative writing. Teachers can create a "Comic Caper Corner" in the classroom for students to exchange their own books. Many drugstores will gladly donate their discarded ones if the children fail to bring books. Reading, writing, and art are combined to demonstrate the creation of a new comic character.

## II. Objectives

1) To use simple media in creating a written composition
2) To create, through composition, an idea that is new
3) To reinforce the use of verb agreement, tone, and style in the composition
4) To use art as a form of creative expression

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Collect various titles of comic books and provide a space in the classroom for them.
2) Allow time for students to browse (1 day or several) through the books.
3) Discuss with the class some of the stories they most enjoyed and why.
4) As a pre-writing exercise, have students choose and discuss two different characters from any of the comic books. Encourage them to create on art paper their own comic character, taking characteristics from the two they chose to create a new one.
5) Children will show these to the class as others share in deciding on an adventure for the new character.
6) While ideas are at a peak, assign the task of writing a composition about the new character's adventure.
7) Teachers should review verb agreement, tone, and style prior to the actual writing assignment. Point out to students that through the new character their papers can develop a unique tone and style.
8) The teacher should be available at this stage to advise and encourage students.
9) Ask volunteers to read the papers and post them, along with the art picture, somewhere in the classroom.
10) Allow a free time for students to read the "Comic Capers." Evaluate the papers.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Read a variety of comic books from the collection in the classroom.
2) Participate in the discussion of these comics.
3) Choose two characters from the selection of books and create, through art, a new comic character.
4) Share these with the class and decide on an adventure for the new character.
5) Create an adventure through written composition for the new comic character.
6) Emphasize the use of verb agreement, tone, and style throughout the composition.
7) Do self-editing of the composition, looking for all features of writing previously studied.
8) Revise the composition and post with the art picture of the comic character.

V. Evaluation

A grade can be given for verb agreement, tone, and the use of style in this composition. Teacher judgment or student-teacher conference can be used to discuss the originality of the composition. Creativity is accepted as part of the child's personality.

TOPIC: Motivating Writing

Elizabeth S. Yount
Blackburn Middle School
Newton, NC
Grade 8

# I'M ME! I'M ME! I'M ME!

## I. Rationale

This is a short activity that will give the students practice in writing about familiar subjects. Its brief length, a paragraph or two, will make it almost painless. While they are doing this activity, they will be focusing on something good about themselves.

## II. Objectives

1) To improve thinking and writing skills as a prerequisite to writing more complicated assignments
2) To think positively about one's self as a unique person

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Instruct the students to make a list of things about themselves that are different from anyone else. These can be physical differences, habits, personality traits, things they do or something they know how to do.
2) Instruct the students to choose one idea from their list and to write a paragraph about this idea that sets them apart from everyone else.

## IV. Procedure for Students

1) Prepare a list of as many things about yourself as you can think of that make you different from everyone else. Try to think of ideas that set you apart completely. It could be something about your looks, your habits, your personality, or things you are able to do that none of your classmates can do. Make sure that the ideas are good things about yourself, not things you don't like about yourself.
2) Choose the one idea from this list that most makes you feel good about yourself.
3) Write a paragraph about this idea explaining why you feel good about it. Only <u>you</u> should be able to write this.
4) Share the paragraph with your teacher or other students. Get oral reactions from the people who read it.

## V. Evaluation

There should be no written evaluation for this activity.

TOPIC: Motivating Writing

Douglas W. Ashton
D. F. Walker Jr. High
Edenton, NC 27932
Grade 7

# ADS AS WRITING STIMULI

## I. Rationale

Teachers, when trying to find a motivational stimulus for student writing, will often overlook familiar sources. One such source is the magazine advertisement. These can give the teacher a foundation on which to build many creative assignments.

## II. Objectives

1) To practice powers of observation
2) To practice writing dramatic prose
3) To develop and practice creativity
4) To learn the concept of personification
5) To practice the skills of persuasion

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Collect different types of magazines and distribute them to the students. Ask the students to choose an ad. Have them observe the ad and similar ads for the same product.
2) Have the students find and observe the product, and ask them to find the most important feature of the item that will make people want to buy it.
3) Have the students envision the product as being human. If the item could speak, what would it say in order to make people buy it?
4) Define the monologue and discuss with the students how one might be written and for what purpose.
5) Have the students develop and act out monologues in which they are the chosen products and are trying to get people to buy them. Encouraging students to make outlandish costumes will add humor and interest to the assignment.
6) Ask the students if they would buy the product. Why or why not?

## IV. Procedure for Students

1) Find an ad in the magazine the teacher has given you. Study the ad and find similar ads for the same product.
2) Find the product and observe it carefully. What feature of the item makes you want to buy it?
3) After observing the product, envision it as human. What would this product say to you to make you want to buy it?
4) Discuss with the teacher the elements of a monologue. What purpose does the monologue serve?

5) Develop and perform a monologue in which you are the product trying to convince a prospective customer to buy you. Dressing as the product might make you be more convincing.
6) Discuss the monologues with the class. Which products would you buy and why?

V. Evaluation

A grade will be given for the creativity evidenced by students in the monologues.

TOPIC: Motivating Writing

Linda Baird
Arndt Middle School
Hickory, NC
Grade 8

# SENSES AND FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

## I. Rationale

To develop students' understanding of figurative language, they must be given opportunities to explore their environment. By asking students to feel and describe unknown objects, comparisons become easier. Playing the game "What's It?" (which is described in this lesson) enables them to recognize and use figures of speech. With insight gained through experience and practice, the students are able to create a descriptive paragraph using similes and metaphors.

## II. Objectives

1) To understand metaphor and simile
2) To make use of the senses for comparisons
3) To feel articles and compare them to other objects
4) To express feelings orally
5) To take an unknown article, compare it to a known article, and write about the discoveries
6) To "flow" from oral communication to written paragraphs

## III. Procedure for Teacher

Assign students the task of bringing in articles of any shape, size, and weight. Allow no one to see them. The following day, do these things:

1) Read to the students a poem or story.
2) Lead the students in a game "What's It?"* to develop an understanding of metaphors and similes (15 minutes).
3) Instruct students to illustrate one simile or metaphor (example: light as a feather). Ask them to label and color the illustration.
4) Spread the articles from the game on a table. Let the students place the cards in front of an article that could be compared using that figure of speech.
5) Assign the writing of a paragraph using metaphors and similes. They are to describe any article on the table.
6) Circulate among the students as a resource person.
7) Divide the students into working groups of four to five for the purpose of critically suggesting changes and evaluating the paragraphs.
8) Collect the papers and evaluate them.
9) Ask for volunteers to read their paragraphs.

*"What's It?"
Rules: The students bring secret articles and place them in a closed box which has a side flap.
A student, "it," places his hand into the box. He feels an article and describes it by using a simile or metaphor. He might say, "The article is as small as a pea, as square as a block, and as heavy as lead. What is it?"
The student who guesses correctly becomes the "it." If no one guesses after three tries, the person seated by the "it" becomes the new "it." The game continues until each child has a turn or until terminated by the teacher.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Bring article(s) for the game; place them in the box.
2) Listen to the teacher read poems and stories.
3) Participate in the discussion.
4) Play the teacher-directed game.
5) Illustrate, lable, and color an example of a metaphor or simile.
6) Write a descriptive paragraph including metaphors and similes about an article from the "What's It?" box.

V. Evaluation

The student will be given one grade for class participation, one grade for expressing himself/herself through figures of speech, and a third for content.

TOPIC: Motivating Writing

Becky B. Hawkins
Lowe's Grove Jr. High
Durham, NC 27713
Grades 8-9

# BUBBLEGUM BIOGRAPHIES

## I. Rationale

The simplest items can be the teacher's greatest teaching aids. The following lesson centers around bubblegum cards and other child-oriented biographical information. These can be used to provoke interest in the lives of others as well as to motivate composition.

This motivation exercise encourages student participation by giving students the opportunity to pick their own topic. It is intended to stimulate simple research skills and to develop a discerning mind. The composition that follows the motivating exercise can be used to diagnose student weaknesses in composition skills, to evaluate a working knowledge of mechanics, or to test those language skills previously studied.

## II. Objectives

1) To practice distinguishing between essential and non-essential information
2) To develop an appreciation for the contributions and interests of others
3) To develop an interest that would lead to a more exhaustive study of a person's life or a comparison between two or more persons
4) To practice condensing information into accurate, concise statements
5) To practice research skills through the use of the library/media center, the interview, and current periodicals

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Collect assorted biographical cards or products such as bubblegum cards, restaurant placements, cereal boxes, and soft drink cans. (Sugar Pops is presently offering a series of cards based on real-life characters of the Old West, and RC Cola cans are offering a series on present-day baseball greats and information about their baseball careers.) Encourage students to help, perhaps offering extra credit to those who bring in materials.
2) Begin to collect these materials 1-2 weeks before the composition exercise is to take place.
3) Display the materials as soon as they are brought to class in order to invoke curiosity and to encourage reading and familiarity.
4) At the end of the one or two week period, discuss with the students the materials on display, pointing out the information stressed, including full name, biographical data, and/or career statistics.

5) Ask each student to pick a person--living or dead--whom he/she knows or would be willing to research. Possibilities might include a family member, a classmate, a historical figure, a movie star, a sports personality, a rock star, an author, an artist.
6) After each student has chosen his/her person, allow class time for the student to collect pertinent biographical information.
7) Encourage the students to record only the most important facts. Some students may need to use the library, to interview someone within the classroom, to read magazines or newspapers, or possibly to interview someone at home. Sufficient time should be given for these activities, perhaps while other class members are working on another assignment.
8) Once all information has been collected, hand out unruled 3 x 5 index cards to the students. Give at least 2 cards to each student so that one can be used for a rough draft before making the final copy.
9) Now ask students to condense their information to brief statements, pointing out that the cards and cans they have discussed include only pertinent information.

Example: Anne Bower
Born March 22, 1965
Brown hair, green eyes
Class comedian
Favorite color--yellow
Wants to study art

Adding a small picture would be a good touch--perhaps a classmate's school picture or a newspaper or magazine cut-out.
10) Instruct students to tack their completed cards on the bulletin board for all class members to see.
11) Develop the preceding exercise into a composition assignment, possibly assigning one of the following:
a) Have students take their cards and incorporate the information into formal biographical sketches.
b) Have students re-write their cards, changing the lists into complete sentences.
c) Have students write a comparison between two of the personalities.
d) Have students choose from the cards a personality unknown to them and write a biographical sketch based on what they <u>think</u> the person's life was like according to information listed on the individual's card.

## IV. Procedure for Students

1) Help the teacher collect biographical cards and products and bring these to school for display.
2) As the collection grows, read the biographies and pay attention to the way the information is written.
3) Participate in a discussion about the biographies, noting their styles and the kinds of information mentioned.
4) Pick a person--living or dead--whom you know or would be willing to research.
5) Using available resources, collect pertinent biographical information about the person you have chosen.
6) Condense this information on the index card(s) distributed by the teacher. The statements need to be concise and need not be in sentence form. A small picture, if available, can be attached.

7) Tack the completed card on the bulletin board for other students to see.
8) Using the cards as a starting point, complete the composition assigned by the teacher.

V. Evaluation

The student should receive two grades for this assignment: one for the biographical card (conciseness, incorporation of pertinent information, format), and the second for the final composition (transition of information to sentence form, sentence structure, the ability to follow teacher's directions, basic mechanics--such as punctuation and capitalization--and word usage). Both grades should be recorded and not averaged together.

TOPIC: Motivating Writing

John Marshall Carter
Westover Jr. High
275 Bonanza Drive
Fayetteville, NC 28303
Grades 7-9

# ADS FOR CADS: UNDERSTANDING PERSUASIVE WRITING

## I. Rationale

The contemporary child is bombarded with persuasive writing. He/she is constantly being induced to buy this, see that, or vote for this. Unless he/she is made aware of the power of persuasive writing and speaking, he/she will be prey for every unscrupulous propagandist.

Relevancy is the key word here. What else is more a part of the contemporary child's life than exposure to media persuasion.

Students are asked to watch and take notes on many T.V. commercials, newspaper advertisements, and radio commercials. Secondly, they are asked to bring in ads for discussion from newspapers and magazines. The students will be asked to evaluate certain ads as to their truthfulness and power. Then, the student will be asked to create "Ads for Cads," practicing the same creative process that professional advertising people put to use. Finally, the students will be asked to write a letter to one advertising company that the student feels is stepping beyond the boundary of truthfulness. Or, the student may have the option to write a letter to the local newspaper warning consumers of false or improper advertising.

## II. Objectives

1) To develop an understanding of persuasive writing
2) To recognize and master the form and style of a formal business letter
3) To practice basic writing skills (capitalization, punctuation, subject-verb agreement, sentence variety, spelling, paragraph recognition)
4) To learn and to practice conventional forms of addressing envelopes
5) To learn to analyze persuasive writing
6) To learn to recognize good and bad propagands
7) To practice writing persuasive writing
8) To practice argumentative writing
9) To practice descriptive writing
10) To recognize the power of multi-media persuasion

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Make a wall display of various types of adversiting.
2) Lead students in a discussion of some of the most memorable advertisements.

3) Question students as to why people remember advertisements.
4) Assign students the task of bringing a number of ads to class.
5) Lead discussion of advertisements.
6) Assign students the task of writing ADS FOR CADS (i.e., funny, ridiculous ads which poke fun at many of the ridiculous ads that are broadcast on T.V. and radio and which are printed in newspapers and magazines).
For Example:

7) Display ADS on wall for 2-3 weeks.
8) Read many of the ADS FOR CADS in class.
9) Assign students the task of choosing one of the following persuasive writing topics:
   a) Write a letter to a company which advertises nationally, telling them to be more careful in their advertising
   b) Write a letter to the editor of the local newspaper warning readers to be on the lookout for false advertising.
10) Appoint student editors.
11) Allow one week for unit.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Discuss advertising in class.
2) Bring ads to class.
3) Discuss persuasive writing in class.
4) Create ADS FOR CADS.
5) Engage in critiquing peers' ADS FOR CADS.
6) Write persuasive letters to ad company or letter to editor.
7) Read and criticize letters of peers.
8) Revise letters.
9) Mail letters.

10) Discuss the importance of understanding power of persuasive writing and advertising.
11) Make a booklet on advertising (i.e., collect ads, ideas, and consumer reports).

V. Evaluation

1) Three Grades
   a) bring in ads (effort)
   b) ADS FOR CADS
   c) letters
2) Criteria
   a) form
   b) content
3) Evaluation
   a) peer
   b) teacher

TOPIC: Motivating Writing

Faye Dickerson
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275 Bonanza Drive
Fayetteville, NC 28303
Grade 9

# THE POLICE CAME AND . . .

## I. Rationale

Students today are automatically turned off by the word "write." If a teacher can motivate the students, a great amount of the teacher's and student's jobs are done.

Role-playing is one of the best methods of student involvement that can be used. This exercise allows for anything from simply telling the story to actually taking the role of a character in the story. By doing this, the students see and hear some interpretations of the characters. Students have some idea of the setting, action, and characters in the story before they begin writing. The introduction to the story is brief enough to leave the direction that the story will take to the individual writer.

## II. Objectives

1) To develop an interest in writing
2) To practice basic writing skills
3) To learn the value of constructive criticism
4) To appreciate the value of revision in writing

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Collect all kinds of objects and put them in a bag (scissors, lock of hair, doll, sunglasses, key, etc.). There should be at least twenty objects in order to be certain that enough are included. Some classes may only need two or three while others might use all twenty.
2) Discuss the way that an author develops characters.
3) Discuss a character from a story that the class has read and the methods used in the development of that character.
4) Do steps 2 and 3 on one day and bring the bag to class the next.
5) Assign the task of completing a story.
6) Have students come up (one at a time) and pull an object from the bag. They are to tell a story based on this object. Each student should add to the story that the first student begins. Remind students that they must develop characters in the story. If the class needs some direction, a one line starter might be given to open the story. For example, "The police came and . . ."

7) When the story has sufficiently been started, end the story-telling and have students write an entire story based on the beginning that they have heard. Caution students against writing exactly what a member of the class has said. They should use this as a basis for their writing, adding to it whenever they feel it is necessary. Remind students that they are allowed to add other characters to their stories.
8) Have students begin the writing in class one day and finish during the next two days.
9) Have students revise papers. Placing students in groups of three and having them read and comment on the papers of their two group members seems to work well.
10) Have students revise papers.
11) Have several students read their papers aloud in class. Doing this on a voluntary basis seems to work best.
12) Collect papers. Read and evaluate.
13) Allow approximately one week for this assignment.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Participate in a class discussion of character development.
2) Participate in a class discussion of the development of a character who appeared in a story read by the class.
3) Take an object from the bag and tell a story based on that object. Be certain that a new story is not started with each object, but that the story which the first person begins is developed by other objects.
4) Write a story based on the beginning that classmates have developed.
5) Seek assistance from students in revising paper. Offer assistance to students on their revisions.
6) Revise rough draft.
7) Read paper aloud in class. (All students will not do this step as time does not allow it.)
8) Submit to teacher on designated day.

V. Evaluation

This assignment is used to motivate writing. A grade would tend to destroy some of that motivation. It should be graded on a pass-fail basis. It is also important that some of these stories are put on display in the classroom.

TOPIC: Motivating Writing

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Grade 7

# SENSITIZING STUDENTS TO DESCRIPTIVE WORDS

## I. Rationale

Pre-writing activities which create awareness of the great variety of words can motivate and stimulate original composition. Three days are needed to complete this activity from introduction through evaluation.

## II. Objectives

1) To make up word lists in five sensory categories
2) To show the relatively limited number of words for smell
3) To open students' eyes to the wealth of descriptive words available in their language

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Present the five categories for words--1) color, 2) pattern and shape, 3) touch and texture, 4) sound, and 5) smell.
2) Set up a few ground rules:
   a) Eliminate hyphenated or double words (off-white, deep purple)
   b) No trade name colors
   c) Only one form of a word
   d) Words may be nouns or adjectives.
3) Pick a basic color--blue, for instance.
4) Point out objects in the classroom and ask students what color these objects are.
5) Receive the students' responses such as blue or something more specific such as navy. If you can create a brief argument between "blue" and "navy", fine! Point out that if blue is a certain color, all blues should be the same color. Obviously they are not. Our language seems to say one thing, our eyes seem to say another. Ask what color is navy? Amethyst? Turquoise? Cerise?
6) Then give the assignment. Pick three or four team leaders. Let them choose teams and begin their lists in the five categories.
7) Let the exercise go into the next class time so that they can consult dictionaries, friends, and other sources. Give them time to compile master lists from individual ones.
8) More than 300 words is a minimum for a good team.

## IV. Procedure for Students

1) Team leaders choose members.
2) Team meetings are held for organizing the word search. Each student is given certain specific responsibilities by the leader or assumes responsibilities in the group process.

3) The leader must see that the members work to cover the sources and categories completely.
4) Students meet a second time to compile individual lists into a master list which should be numbered and categorized for convenience in totaling the number of words.

V. Evaluation

1) The teams will compare lists, making note of any words not found on all lists. These may be listed on the chalkboard or on chart paper for the class to note.
2) The teams will discuss and report to each other on their sources.
3) A grade will be assigned to each team member based on the team's standing. The team with the most words get A+. Second place team gets A. Third place team gets B+. Fourth place team gets B.
Or:
No grade need be given.

TOPIC: Motivating Writing

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Grades 7-8

# GRAMMAR PICTURES

## I. Rationale

In place of drill, some fun exercises stimulate and reinforce previously learned material. By using pictures from National Geographic, teachers stimulate growth in knowledge of the parts of speech by having students observe and list details. In a span of approximately one week, students sharpen skills of observation, develop more confidence in their usage, and exhibit creativity. Students observe, write, and integrate parts of speech into a descriptive whole.

## II. Objectives

1) To learn and reinforce parts of speech
2) To be motivated to write by observing
3) To learn to observe details
4) To learn to write a descriptive paragraph

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Select thought-provoking pictures from National Geographic--landscapes or portraits are best.
2) Tell the class that they are looking for things, people, places, or ideas.
3) Show the picture to the class; allow enough time for all students to see the picture but not enough time for individual examination. Cover the picture.
4) Ask students to list all the people, places, or things they saw in the picture.
5) Discuss orally the many different words listed by the students.
6) Collect the lists.
7) Follow the same procedure the next day by having students add to yesterday's list. Today they will write down all the colors they see and all the descriptive words they are able to use about the picture.
8) This lesson can continue through verbs and adverbs by following the same procedure.
9) Once the lists are completed, discuss the many different words used by students.
10) Discuss possible descriptions that could be written about this picture. Read a descriptive paragraph to the class. Discuss the qualities of a descriptive paragraph.
11) Assign the students the task of writing a descriptive paragraph about the picture. They should use their lists of words in writing this descriptive paragraph.

12) Students should revise the paragraphs, employing good sentence structure and correct usage.
13) Share these paragraphs with the class and decide whose stories best describe the picture.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Review with your teacher the meanings of nouns, verbs, etc.
2) Look carefully at the picture the teacher shows, noting people, places, things, ideas, colors, actions, etc.
3) Make lists of things you notice, separating items into columns asked for by the teacher.
4) Discuss your words and listen carefully to the words classmates have written.
5) Discuss the qualities of a descriptive paragraph and write a descriptive paragraph about the picture, using your lists of words.
6) Correct all mistakes and rewrite your paragraph.
7) Share your paragraph with the class and help the class decide whose paragraphs best describe the picture.

V. Evaluation

These paragraphs should be graded on the basis of details noted and used and descriptive words employed by the student. A comprehensive letter grade for descriptive quality would be most appropriate.

TOPIC: Motivating Writing

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# EYE WITNESS

## I. Rationale

A very important part of writing expressively is learning to describe detail. Not only in creative writing is detail helpful in enabling the reader to become a part of the action, but descriptive writing in reporting the news is also vital in conveying to the reader a sense of present-ness.

News reporting is definitely a relevant activity for junior high school students, since they are living in an age when almost every event is recorded by newspaperman, cameraman, or historian.

In addition to practicing basic writing skills, the student will have an opportunity to develop and organize the details of events.

This particular unit is very useful in demonstrating to students the correlation of English and history and, more specifically, the link between accurate, descriptive writing and seeking the truth of an event.

## II. Objectives

1) To develop and practice reporting the truth of an event.
2) To recognize that eye-witness accounts can often be in conflict because different people see a single event in different ways.
3) To practice basic writing skills (capitalization, punctuation, spelling, organization, descriptive writing, subject-verb agreement, coherent writing, analytical thinking and reporting).
4) To lead students to a conclusion that the writer's goal, whether the writer is a novelist, an historian, or a newspaperperson, should be to write the truth.
5) Lead students to a conclusion that writing descriptively is vitally important.

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Introduce this unit with the following role-play activity: Have two students practice the following scene:

   Student A is named Tom. Tom has a friend Sam (Student B) to whom Tom has loaned $100. Both are in need of money since they are in college.

Sam agreed to pay Tom the money in two weeks. Unfortunately for their friendship, Sam has not paid Tom back and two months have elapsed. Tom is hesitant to say anything. But, because of a need for money, Tom confronts Sam with the problem.

An argument develops. Verbal blows lead to physical ones. Tom delivers the first push and Sam retaliates with a right hook to Tom's left jaw. This blow knocks Tom to the ground and his head accidentally hits a rock.

Sam realizes that Tom is either dead or seriously hurt. He panicks! He drags Tom's body into a wooded area and runs.

There was an eye-witness to this event. A small boy was playing in the wooded area and the boy saw almost all of the fight--not the preliminary verbal battle. Neither did this "eye-witness" know the reason for this conflict.

No sooner had Sam disappeared when the little boy stopped a police patrol car and related the story. In addition to getting at the truth of the matter, the little boy must now give the policeman a description of the incident and the participant who ran.

Could you give the policeman a vivid account of what happened and of the boy who ran?

2) After allowing students time to read the scenario, ask them to write a vivid description of their lost brother or sister so that the police will have an idea of for whom they are searching.
3) Read some descriptions in class.
4) Allow students to share descriptions with friends.
5) Assign students the task of evaluating the paper, positively criticizing the mechanics and quizzing students about their sibling's description.
6) Have students rewrite descriptions based on peer evaluation.
7) Assign students the task of watching T.V. news shows for a couple of nights.
8) Assign students the task of reading about the same events in the newspaper and taking notes on each.
9) Discuss in class how the two interpretations of the same event differ.
10) Divide students into groups of five. Assign each group the task of descriptively reporting about a personal or school event. For example, they may choose to report on:
    a) a school sporting event that is in season
    b) a movie
    c) a birthday party
    d) a rock concert
    e) a class trip.

11) Allow a week for the group report: observing, note taking and writing.
12) Allow the group members to read each other's report and comment about the varying interpretations of the same event.
13) Assign groups the task of evaluating each member's paper.
14) Evaluate each report.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Read scenario.
2) Discuss writing descriptively and objectively in class with teacher.
3) Write a vivid description of student's brother or sister for police.
4) View T.V. news show.
5) Read about same events in newspaper.
6) Take notes on T.V. news show and newspaper articles.
7) Discuss differences in many reports about same subject.
8) Discuss and evaluate peers' reports.
9) Report on a school event or personal event.
10) Evaluate peers' reports.
11) Compare reports on same event, noting the different interpretations and emphases.

V. Evaluation

1) Three Grades
   a) grade for effort
   b) grade for organizing and descriptive ability
   c) grade for final draft as a whole
2) Evaluation
   a) peer
   b) teacher
   c) individual
   d) group

TOPIC: Writing for Varieties of Audiences

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Grades 7-8

# THE DUEL

## I. Rationale

Interdisciplinary studies encourage student interaction and participation in activities that stimulate learning and provide ways to incorporate language into other fields of study. Social studies classes offer opportunities for writing which include factual detail. When students are placed in a specific time in history, they must learn to think as the people of that time. The Hamilton-Burr duel, for example, involves the use of personal letters and can serve as a basis for student letter writing, incorporating the events of the duel. Beginning a social studies unit with a three-day letter writing exercise entices students to find out more about the duel and improves and reinforces letter writing skills.

## II. Objectives

1) To gain a better understanding of a specific period in history
2) To expand political expertise in a given time period
3) To improve personal letter writing skills
4) To practice writing standard English

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Find a good version of the story of the Hamilton-Burr duel, being sure that the story includes the events leading up to the duel. A good version can be found in the Social Studies-U. S. History textbook We The People.
2) Read the story to the class. Have a long discussion of possible reasons for the letters being written.
3) Next day review and discuss the form of a personal letter. Divide students into two groups, one for Hamilton and one for Burr.
4) The group taking the part of Hamilton is to decide collectively and as historically accurate as possible the reasons Hamilton might have criticized Burr in the letters Hamilton wrote to his friend. The students then compose individual letters from Hamilton to his friend. They should incorporate time, imagination, and factual evidence and should be given time for necessary research. This takes two class periods.
5) The group taking the part of Burr is to decide, collectively and orally, alternatives to the duel that Burr could have taken. Each person in the group then writes a letter from Burr to Hamilton, stating Burr's position and the retaliation Burr has chosen. His challenge to a duel might be one of the alternatives. This requires two class periods.

6) On the fourth day, the letters are revised and edited by individual students with the teacher serving as editorial advisor.
7) On the same day, the letters are exchanged with the other group. A few are read aloud.
8) The letters are collected.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Listen as the teacher reads the story of the Burr-Hamilton duel. Pay particular attention to the part played in the duel by the Hamilton letters.
2) Discuss the many reasons for the letters and the events leading up to the writing of the letters.
3) Once assigned to a group, participate as your teacher asks. If you are in the Hamilton group, do some research into the events of the time. Try to decide factual reasons for Hamilton's feelings. Put yourself in his place and in this particular period of history. Write your letter as if you were Hamilton writing to his friend.

   If you are in the Burr group, discuss with others possible alternatives Burr could have chosen other than the duel. Decide which choice you would have made if you had been Burr and write a letter to Hamilton listing your reasons for anger and your choice of retaliation. If you think no other alternative is possible, you may write to Hamilton requesting a duel.
4) Be sure to follow the form used for a personal letter. Make all corrections that are necessary in your letter. Revise and rewrite your letter.
5) Exchange your group's letters with the other group. Some students will be asked to read aloud their letters.
6) Turn in your letters to the teacher.

V. Evaluation

Collect all the letters and grade them on the basis of factual evidence used, imagination, and correct usage of the personal letter format. Two grades may be given, giving some emphasis to effort. A linear scale would fit this type of assignment.

TOPIC: Writing for Varieties of Audiences

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Grade 9

# ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE

## I. Rationale

One of the best methods of motivating writing is to let the students know that their writing is going to be used for an audience other than the teacher. A readers' theatre develops a sense of purpose as the students' writing is used for a production.

Readers' theatres can be handled in any number of ways. The advantages of using readers' theatre in the classroom are that no props are necessary and students have the script in front of them, so they do not memorize the script.

Because there can be so many variations, a sample readers' theatre which was produced by ninth graders is given in this plan.

## II. Objectives

1) To develop tone, pitch, and inflection of voice
2) To develop reading skills
3) To develop basic writing skills
4) To learn what the editing process requires
5) To gain an understanding of the term, Readers' Theatre

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Discuss what a readers' theatre production involves.
2) Assign students the task of writing three poems that could be used in the production. Of the three poems, one should be about a person, one about a thing, and one about a place.
3) Allow students two class periods to work on poetry.
4) Collect poems.
5) Have several students edit the poetry and compile a workable readers' theatre script. Students should determine what emotions the poetry reflects and develop characters based on these emotions. In the production that was done by ninth graders, five characters were developed. The five characters were a bitter person, a sad person, a humorous person, a crazy person, and a dreamer.
6) Work with the students on the script. Pay close attention to the introduction of the characters, the development of the characters, and the conclusion of the production.
7) Hand out completed script to the class.
8) Read over the script as a group and discuss any changes that should be made.

9) Have students audition for the parts in class. Remind them that their voices and facial expressions are acting for them.
10) Select students for the parts. Give each a copy of script.
11) Direct student rehearsals and help them finalize the script.
12) Have a student write the lyrics to a song for an introduction to the production.
13) Have a student put this to music and sing it for the production.
14) Set up lighting for the production. Ideally, one light is on each character and only that light is on as the character speaks.
15) Rehearse!
16) Present the readers' theatre to the class. Perhaps it can later be presented to the drama club or entire student body.
17) Discuss with the class any changes that should have been made, as well as the strong points of the production.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Participate in a class discussion of what a readers' theatre involves.
2) Write three poems about a person, place, and thing. (One poem on each of the three.)
3) A group of students will edit the poetry and compile a workable script.
4) This group will gain assistance from the teacher.
5) All students will participate in a class discussion of the script.
6) Audition for parts in the readers' theatre production.
7) A group of selected students will rehearse and make any necessary changes in the script.
8) A student or several students will write a song and perform it to introduce the production.
9) Students participating will rehearse.
10) Students will present the readers' theatre to the class.
11) Participate in a discussion of the production.

V. Evaluation

No evaluation of the writing assignment is made. Whether or not the poetry is used in the production is not a means of evaluation. Its use is determined by how well it fits into the script.

An evaluation of the production is made orally in the final class discussion. The teacher, performers, and class evaluate the production in terms of what the students have gained by the performance. The skills acquired that can be used later are also considered.

TOPICS: Writing for Varieties of Audiences

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Grades 7-9

# OLD POETS AND NEW POETS: CREATING AN ANTHOLOGY

## I. Rationale

Models of good writing are invaluable for junior high school, or for any age group. Imitation is a tremendous stimulus to expressive writing. Not only will the student benefit from seeing a mechanically sound, creatively inspiring piece of literature, but the student will also recognize the tremendous variety of subject matter and the almost unlimited forms of poetry. The teacher is helping seventh graders become aware of the craft of poetry and those time-honored poets of yesterday and today.

Students will be asked to read several poems and be introduced to many forms of poetry and many famous poets. The purposes of this writing assignment are to help students develop critical reviewing skills and the craft of poetry; another purpose is to give them a useful format for their creative work.

The audience will be varied for this exercise. The students will be told that their anthologies will be read and criticized by teachers, students, parents, and administrators.

Lastly, the student will have an attractive creation and a memorable souvenir of their efforts.

## II. Objectives

1) To develop an understanding of poetic expression.
2) To recognize the differences in the following forms:
   a) couplet
   b) limerick
   c) haiku
   d) sonnet
   e) narrative poetry
   f) free verse.
3) To recognize and be able to define the following:
   a) poetry
   b) prose
   c) foot
   d) meter
   e) rhythm
   f) form
   g) content
   h) onomatopoeia
   i) alliteration.

4) To develop an appreciation of poetry as a means of creation and expression.
5) To develop an awareness of the various types of poetry.
6) To develop an objective attitude toward one's own work.
7) To learn to critize objectively the work of others.

III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Create an atmosphere for poetry (i.e., meaningful pictures, filmstrips, discussions, posters, mobiles).
2) Before anything else, ask students to write an answer to this question, "What is poetry?" Collect answers and read them at end of unit. Discuss with students their definitions of poetry after creating anthologies.
3) Help students recognize that poetry is a medium for personal expression that is used almost daily and not an intellectual exercise only for a few. Point out poetry in everyday living.
4) Lead period-long discussions of the various forms of poetry.
5) Allow students to practice creating haiku, sonnets, limericks, etc.
6) Provide students many volumes of good poetry and give free reading time.
7) Have individual conferences with students about what they have read.
8) Lead students to an understanding that their poetic creations are prized possessions and that other people are very interested in viewing them.
9) Allow five weeks for this unit (two weeks for introduction of terminology, prewriting experiences, filmstrips; one week of reading poetry of famous poets and classmates; two weeks for assembling anthology).
10) Appoint five student editors to review work in each of five groups. One day for the last two weeks will be devoted to student editing.
11) Provide three prizes for the anthologies that are considered the three best (ask principal and two or three teachers to judge).
12) Allow students to watch Zebra Wings poetry lessons
For example:
    a) $2.00 for 1st
    b) $1.00 for 2nd
    c) $.50 for 3rd or some other alternative.
13) Allow students to read each other's anthologies
14) Put definite restrictions and limits on anthologies:
    a) Five of their favorite poems by famous poets
    b) Six poems of their own:
        1 limerick
        1 haiku
        (4 of their choosing)
    c) A creative cover
    d) A creative title (the words book or poetry may not be used in the title)
    e) A table of contents
    f) A favorite quote page

g) A dedication page
h) About the author page
i) Snapshot of author.

15) Invite other people in to see the anthologies.
16) Mark grades on separate sheet of paper so that the work won't be marred.
17) Play recordings of poems being read (some by authors).
18) Read peoms aloud to class.
19) Allow students to read poems.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Read various poems by famous poets and classmates.
2) Write practice poems.
3) Revise poems with help of peer editors and teacher.
4) Participate in class discussions of poetry.
5) Engage in round-robin readings of classmates' work.
6) Offer positive criticism of classmates' work.
7) Consider suggestions for revisions offered by classmates.
8) Seek teacher's assitance on any problematical items.
9) Create and assemble an anthology of poetry.
10) Students will create a mobile of the life and works of one poet.

V. Evaluation

There will be a number of grades for this project since it covers a rather lengthy period. For example, there will be two grades given and recorded at the completion of the anthology, one grade for form and content, the other for creativity. Consideration in formulating these two grades will be given to peer editors' critiques.

In addition to the two big grades there will be other "small" grades given during the five week period for periodic checkups after covering a portion of the total unit.

TOPIC: Writing for Varieties of Audiences

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# HAVE YOU HUGGED YOUR FABLE TODAY?

## I. Rationale

When children are in elementary school, they frequently have projects and papers to take home to "show off." These inevitably become family keepsakes, taped to the refrigerator or stored in the dresser drawer and pulled out during moments of nostalgia. Junior High parents and students deserve this same opportunity in the midst of the awkwardness and dilemmas that tend to overshadow the early teen years. Therefore, this lesson is geared toward the production of a "keepsake," while at the same time expanding the students' knowledge of the short story and use of composition skills. The emphasis is not so much on perfection as on publication, and as long as a student participates in the given activities, he/she will be satisfactorily completing the assignment. The lesson should take approximately two weeks to complete, although this could vary with those doing the illustrations. The project does require some organization and proof-reading time, but the final product is rewarding and establishes that link with home that is so often necessary.

## II. Objectives

1) To compile a booklet of original stories for each student and family
2) To apply the style of an established genre to an original composition
3) To develop an idea aimed at conveying one message
4) To employ the basic elements of the short story, including characterization, setting, plot, point of view, conflict, and theme
5) To learn to work cooperatively with classmates

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Read as a class some fables from a textbook or collected readings.
2) Explain the element of a fable, especially emphasizing the use (usually) of animals as characters, the dilemma presented to one or more of the characters, and the concluding moral.
3) After reading several other fables or listening to recorded fables, lead a class discussion aimed at identifying the elements stressed in #2.
4) If one is available, show a filmed version of a fable (these are usually aimed at elementary children but can be enjoyed by all grade levels).

5) Instruct students to identify briefly in writing the elements stressed in #2, as found in the film.
6) Discuss the film, having each student check his/her own list of elements during the discussion.
7) Direct each student to write a fable, being sure to stress the elements previously discussed.
8) Allow one class period and several nights to complete the assignment.
9) Take up assignments and read, making suggestions, but do not grade.
10) Return papers to students and allot class time to rewrite, stressing neatness and the use of ink. At this time, a student may wish to write an entirely different fable from his/her original one. This should be allowed with the teacher repeating step #9.
11) Collect the fables and type them on ditto masters for duplication. Be sure to include each student's name after his/her work.
12) Illustrate some or all of the fables:
    a) Ask an artistically talented student to illustrate several of the fables
    b) Suggest that some of the students might wish to illustrate their own fable or those of their classmates
    c) Ask someone outside the class, possibly even outside the school, to read the fables and to choose several at random to illustrate.
13) Duplicate the fables and illustrations.
14) Using student helpers, compile the pages with a title page, designating the school, the year, and the class involved.
15) Use construction paper as a cover.
16) Give a copy of the fable booklet to the following:
    a) each student
    b) anyone from outside the class who assisted in its compilation
    c) the school library/media center.
17) Allow students times to read the booklets and discuss the final products among themselves.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Read the assigned fables.
2) Take notes during the explanation of the fable, being sure to record its primary elements.
3) Read and/or listen to additional fables and participate in the discussion of the elements of them.
4) Watch a filmed fable.
5) Write the elements of the fable as seen in the film on a sheet of paper.
6) Participate in a discussion of the film, changing your own list of elements when necessary.
7) Write an original fable, being sure to include the primary elements.
8) Turn in assignment.
9) When the paper is returned, note the teacher's remarks, ask for explanations if unclear as to the teacher's meaning, and write the final draft. At this point, the entire fable may be thrown out and a new one written, repeating steps 7, 8, and 9.

10) Submit the final draft.
11) Upon receiving the fable booklet, read each fable and discuss with classmates the final product.

V. Evaluation

No grade should be given outside a passing or failing consideration. The passing student is the one who completes the final product. The only reason for failure is that the student makes no attempt to participate in the activities. I have found that, in this situation, the student is his/her own worst critic. A student will sometimes remark that he/she would like to try again, even after the completed booklet has been distributed. That student realized the effort made was not his/her best. This lesson is as valuable as any grade I could give.

TOPIC: Writing for Varieties of Audiences

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# THE FUTURE FOR AUDIENCE APPEAL

## I. Rationale

Students in today's classrooms might be taught reading, writing, and language skills, but often they are not reminded that they are writing for real people. By combining the skills of reading, observing, and describing science fiction, students can be inspired to write and develop the skills of writing for a specific audience.

## II. Objectives

1) To practice reading skills
2) To develop creativity
3) To practice the skills of observation
4) To develop the skills involved in writing for a specific audience
5) To develop the skills of editing and revision
6) To practice the skills of organization

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Have the students read Isaac Asimov's "Moon Colony" from On The Edge, or a similar science fiction short story. Discuss how man might be living in the 21st century.
2) Have the students find and bring in pictures of futuristic homes. Discuss some possible futuristic innovations and the reasons they would be included.
3) Give the students drawing paper, asking them to draw their own future house. Allow ample time for them to include specific details in their sketch.
4) Once the sketches are finished, ask the students to exchange drawings and write a description of the house in front of them for a particular audience, such as a teacher, a scientist, a young child, etc. Make sure that the students identify the specific audience.
5) Collect the drawings and descriptions. Read the descriptions to the students as you display the corresponding drawings. Ask the students to identify the audience and then play the part of that audience. Have them comment on the strengths of the paper and suggest improvements for it.
6) After the discussion, pass the papers back to the students, asking that they make the necessary revisions.
7) Collect the papers.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Read and discuss Isaac Asimov's "Moon Colony." As you discuss, envision the people of the 21st century, and the different buildings they might use.
2) Bring in pictures of futuristic homes and comment about the conveniences and necessities you would find, and the reasons for their existence.
3) After receiving drawing paper, design your own 21st century house, making sure you include all possible innovations.
4) When you have finished your drawing, exchange it with another student. Write a dexcription of that drawing, directing it at a specific audience. At the end, tell who your audience is.
5) Hand your paper and drawing in to the teacher. As the descriptions are read, guess and play the roles of the different audiences.
6) Comment on the paper's strengths and suggest improvements.
7) When your paper is returned, make the necessary revisions, and give the final draft to the teacher.

V. Evaluation

Two grades will be given for this assignment. The first grade will be given for the skill with which the paper is directed at its stated audience. The second will be given for style, form, mechanics, and spelling.

TOPIC: Writing for Varieties of Audiences

Elizabeth S. Yount
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Route 1
Newton, NC
Grade 8

# YA'LL COME BACK

## I. Rationale

By using dialect, in this case "Southernese," students can learn how it can be used to pinpoint locale, ridicule, create a personality, and create humor. This is an activity that students will enjoy sharing with their peers and with their families. In fact, their families may be able to give them some suggestions of words or phrases to be used.

## II. Objectives

1) To learn that many of the expressions and words you use every day could be classified as "Southernese"
2) To learn that TV and radio programs use this type of speech for specific purposes: to create humor, to denote a location or area, to create a specific character for a play or series, or to ridicule in a subtle manner
3) To know that when a particular person has a lot of influence or power and that person has a distinct speech pattern, many writers will pick this up and use it as an attention-getter (example: John F. Kennedy, Jimmy Carter)

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Explain to the students what you mean by "Southernese" (examples: "arn" for iron, "tar" for tire, "cheer" for chair, "bum" for bomb).
2) Ask the students to listen closely for about three days to TV programs, radio programs, conversations among friends, relatives or anyone else who may pronounce a word in a distinct way or use a different meaning than is in the dictionary. (If it's heard from a native North Carolinean it's likely to be "Southernese.")
3) Instruct them to make a list of these words as quickly as they can after hearing them so that they won't forget.
4) After collecting as many expressions as they can, have the students put each expression into a single sentence.
5) Ask students to design mobiles (from Bristol board, doubled construction paper, or any paper firm enough to hold a shape) and to put the expression on one side and the sentence on the other side. If the shape of the mobile can be relevant to the sentence,it will be more interesting. For example, the sentence "She sat in the cheer" could be put on a mobile that is cut out to resemble a chair of some kind.

6) With the help of the students and perhaps the janitor, attach cards to the mobiles and hang them from the ceiling in your classroom.
7) After the sentences are all completed, collect them from the students and put them on a master sheet. Run off copies for each student and perhaps print a copy in the school newspaper.
8) Have the students use these expressions in a story written with a Southern locale.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Listen to TV and radio programs and conversations among friends and relatives who use any kind of "Southernese" which your teacher has explained to you. Add these expressions to your list before you forget them.
2) After collecting as many expressions as possible, write each one into a single sentence.
3) Design mobiles (relevant to expressions, if possible), cut them out of paper provided by your teacher; print the expressions on one side of the mobile and the sentence on the other side. Make the mobiles at least 12" to 18" long and print in letters large enough to be seen easily. Use a magic marker to do the printing.
4) Turn in to your teacher a copy of your sentences so that they can be duplicated for the class.
5) Write a story with a Southern locale, using as many of the expressions as you can in the story.

V. Evaluation

The sentences can be evaluated by the enjoyment the students get out of the project. The stories can be evaluated for unity and coherence. Less emphasis should be placed on the mechanics of writing.

TOPIC: Writing Reports, Reviews, Arguments, Descriptions

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Grades 8-9

# WHAT'S WRONG WITH OUR SCHOOL
## (Editorial Writing)

## I. Rationale

Most students enjoy expressing their likes and dislikes about school. One method of channeling their enthusiasm and self-expression is to ask them to list everything they think is wrong with their school and to think of possible solutions. Such an activity easily develops into editorial writing for the school newspaper. (If your school has no paper, perhaps it's time for you and your students to initiate one!) This one week assignment also involves the study of editorials and letters to the editor of local papers.

Each student chooses one area of school life that needs to be changed and offers possible solutions to the problem in editorial form. The final papers are submitted to the journalism staff for publication.

(An optional follow-up is an editorial on "What's Right With Our School." Second option is to submit a letter to the editor of the local paper on a current issue.)

## II. Objectives

1) To develop an understanding of a citizen's responsibility in a democracy
2) To offer constructive criticism and solutions to problems
3) To practice writing an editorial for a school paper as preparation for writing letters to the editor of local papers
4) To foster school improvements through writing
5) To practice basic writing skills
6) To address an adult as well as a student audience
7) To practice being specific and persuasive

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Invite students to list everything they consider wrong with their school.
2) Tell students to star the items that they believe can be corrected.
3) Lead a class discussion, focusing on the areas that might have solutions. List these on the board or overhead projector. Discuss possible solutions.

4) Ask students to choose one of the problems they have solutions for and to begin planning an editorial for the school paper.
5) Discuss editorials and letters to the editor in local newspapers. Point out the journalistic style, method of presentation, the psychology employed, and use of examples and suggestions.
6) Assign a rough draft to be written, shared in small groups, discussed and revised.
7) Grade the revised paper.
8) Optional follow-up assignment: "What's Right With Our School" or a letter to the editor of the local paper on a subject of concern to students.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) List gripes about your school.
2) Star the problems that might be corrected if the solutions are feasible and inexpensive.
3) Discuss problems and solutions.
4) Choose one problem to solve and begin thinking of an editorial to write.
5) Analyze editorials and letters to the editor in local papers. Take notes on writers' methods of presentation and persuasion.
6) Write a rough draft of the editorial; share it with classmates; revise and write the final copy.
7) Choose the best editorials to be submitted to the school paper.
8) Consider optional assignments.

V. Evaluation

1) The final paper will be graded according to content, art of persuasion, and basic standards of written English.
2) The ultimate evaluation will be the solving of the problem as suggested by the writer.

TOPIC: Writing Reports, Reviews, Arguments, Descriptions

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# TREASURE HUNT

## I. Rationale

Reading a classic can be a relevant assignment for students, especially if parallels can be drawn between the past and the present. The study of Treasure Island can provide numerous learning experiences, with many avenues open for composition. However, while this lesson can be used as a follow-up to the study of Treasure Island, it can also be used independently as a lesson on giving directions. (If this approach is desired, the teacher should see Procedures for Teacher, 2-13, making sure that compass directions are stressed.) The lesson will require advance preparation, but the visual aid produced can be used year after year and stored easily.

Few people realize that Treasure Island was written after Stevenson had drawn the treasure map. He drew the map originally for his son, and it provoked such interest that Stevenson was urged to write a story about it. A possible branch of this assignment might be the creation of student maps with stories to match or maps by some students, designed to motivate stories by others.

## II. Objectives

1) To give directions accurately so that others can reach the necessary conclusion
2) To develop sentences which give precise information and stay within stated restrictions
3) To follow directions closely
4) To practice reading a map, paying special attention to compass directions as opposed to the use of terms such as "up," "down," "right," or "left"
5) To appreciate the need to become familiar with local geography and landmarks

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) (optional) During the study of Treasure Island, duplicate copies of a map of Treasure Island, having students fill in geographical points such as Spyglass Hill, the White Rock, the location of the stockade, and of primary importance, the sight where the treasure is supposedly buried.
2) Before assigning the following writing lesson, review the Treasure Island map and the written directions for finding the treasure, stressing the use of compass directions: N, S, NW, SSE, etc.

3) Reproduce on a large piece of bulletin board paper or an old sheet your school district, labeling the streets and route numbers and designating the location of the school. Be sure to include compass directions in one corner, showing North, South, East, and West.
4) Show this map to the entire class and take time to make sure each student can find the location of his/her home. If a student's road is not included, be sure to draw it in.
5) Announce to the students that they are to imagine that each has found a large sum of money and that he/she needs to bury this money somewhere in the area covered on the map.
6) Direct each student to pick a spot where he/she might bury this treasure and to keep this information secret.
7) Assign each student the task of giving written directions that someone else might follow to reach the buried treasure:
   a) The starting point must be the same for all students. This may be decided by the class. It could be the school, a local store, a cemetery, etc.
   b) The directions must be written in sentence form.
   c) The terms "right" and "left" may not be used.
   d) Compass directions may be used and may be abbreviated (ex., N, S.)
   e) Landmarks may be used (ex., Turn east at the old Sears building.)
   f) The student may <u>not</u> say, "The treasure is buried under the tree in Mr. Lawrence's yard."
   g) The student <u>may</u> say instead, "The treasure is in front of the 3rd building on the south side of Markham Ave. under the old hickory tree."
   h) These directions can be written as a list rather than a paragraph, primarily for the sake of clarity.
   i) Distance may be stated in feet, yards, and miles, but this could afford the opportunity to practice the metric system.
8) The teacher should demonstrate this procedure by reading one of his/her own while pointing out specifics on the map.
9) The teacher should be available at all times during the writing process to answer student questions.
10) Allow at least one class period to work on the assignment and direct students to turn in the assignment the next day.
11) On an impromptu basis, read a few of the directions to the class without divulging the name of the author.
12) Select students to attempt to follow the directions by pointing out locations on the map as each direction is given.

IV. <u>Procedure for Students</u>

1) Go over with the teacher the map of Treasure Island, making sure compass directions are understood.
2) Follow along with the teacher the discussion of the large local map at the front of the room.
3) Be sure you can find the location of your home on the map and ask for the teacher's assistance if you are having trouble.

4) Pick a spot on the map where treasure might be buried. Do not tell anyone the site picked.
5) Listen carefully to the teacher's directions for the composition assignment.
6) Write directions for finding the treasure following the specific instructions listed by the teacher.
7) Ask the teacher for help whenever necessary, but try to consult other students as little as possible.
8) Make a final draft and turn it in at the given time.
9) Listen as the teacher reads some selected papers and try to "find" the treasure according to the directions given.

V. Evaluation

Two grades will be given to this assignment: one based on how accurately the student wrote directions, and the second for how well the student followed the format given by the teacher. Consideration should also be given to the complexity of the students' directions. The students whose treasures were buried several miles away and around many corners should receive higher credit than the students who buried their treasure two blocks away from the starting point. This consideration could be easily incorporated within the first or second grade.

TOPIC: Writing Reports, Reviews, Arguments, Descriptions

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Grade 7

# THE HISTORY BEHIND THE HOUSE

## I. Rationale

In order to write a story, the average junior high student must be given a concrete example on which to base the story. By planning a trip to a house of historical significance, the student is allowed to experience the physical plant first-hand, while also experiencing a portion of his/her local heritage.

Once the field trip has been concluded, two writing assignments can be made. The first would be a descriptive essay that develops and reinforces previous lessons on description; the second, a story that teaches the student elements of the narrative and at the same time calls upon the student to be creative.

Finally, the students acquire an appreciation of their work and the work of others by sharing products in an evaluative process.

## II. Objectives

1) To acquaint the student with local history
2) To develop the powers of observation and other sensory skills
3) To develop organizational skills
4) To develop skills of editing and revision
5) To develop research skills

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Select an old house or building of historical significance and arrange for a field trip and tour of the house.
2) Select a historical period in which the house existed. Have the students research this period before going on the field trip. This will help familiarize the student with the actual history of the house and prepare them for what they are to observe.
3) Ask the students to take notes for a detailed descriptive essay about the house.
4) On returning to the classroom, the teacher will have the students write a detailed descriptive essay about the house. Read and discuss these essays with the class, pointing out the strong points in the essays and how they might be improved.
5) After the discussion, ask the students to envision the house in its historical period, as well as the people who may have lived there at the time. Hold a general class discussion, getting ideas about the situation from each student.

6) The students are then given two class periods to write a story based on the discussion.
7) When the rough drafts are finished, have the students exchange papers for the prupose of editing. Each paper should be edited by at least two other students.
8) After the last revision, collect the final drafts from the students.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Do some research on the historical period assigned. Be sure to check old newspapers and magazines as well as encyclopedias and other books.
2) On the field trip, you are to look at the house carefully, observing all details and taking notes.
3) On returning to class, organize your notes and write a detailed descriptive essay of no more than two pages.
4) The essays will be read, and a discussion of their strong points and needed improvements will be conducted. Be sure to listen to other comments and suggestions, and offer suggestions on other papers.
5) A second discussion will follow, in which you will be asked to envision what life was like in a particular historical period.
6) After the discussion, write a story of no more than 1000 words about a possible crisis that occurred in the house.
7) After a rough draft is completed, choose two students to read and edit your paper, making necessary revisions based on their recommendations.
8) Once the final draft has been completed, hand the paper in to the teacher.

V. Evaluation

Three grades will be given for this assignment. The first will be given for a descriptive essay, based on the accuracy of the description. The second grade will be given for form, mechanics, spelling, and style of the narrative essay. The final grade will be given for the level of perception in the narrative essay.

TOPIC: Writing Reports, Reviews, Arguments, Descriptions

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Grade 9

# BOOK LOOK

## I. Rationale

Book reports seem to be one of students' most dreaded assignments. Any variation from "summarize the book" seems to increase student interest in book reports. Also, in doing this assignment, students must have an understanding of the book and its characters.

Students must be instructed to select fiction or biography for this book report.

## II. Objectives

1) To practice reading skills
2) To practice basic writing skills
3) To develop an understanding of the term "adjective" and its use in description

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Have all students select a biography or fiction.
2) Give students one class period to begin reading the book.
3) Assign the task of a book report (as is outlined in the following steps) after the students have read for one class period. Prepare students for the assignment, although it will not be done until two weeks later.
4) Discuss the use of adjectives in descriptive writing.
5) Have students write title and author of book on paper. (Assignment is to be done in class.)
6) Have students list three main characters of the book.
7) For each of these characters, have the student write five adjectives that describe the character.
8) For each of these adjectives, have the student write two reasons for selecting this adjective to describe the character. The student must base these reasons on either events or descriptive passages from the book.
9) Allow students two days to work on writing papers. Allow a third day to finish writing and revise papers.
10) Collect papers and evaluate.

## IV. Procedure for Students

1) Select a book to read (biography or fiction).
2) Participate in a class discussion of the term "adjective" and its use in descriptive writing.

3) Read the book (one period in class).
4) In doing a book report, write the title and author of the book on a sheet of paper.
5) List three main characters of the book.
6) List five adjectives that describe each character.
7) For each of these adjectives, write two reasons for selecting this adjective to describe the character. Use examples of events or descriptive passages from the book as reasons to support your adjective choice.
8) Complete a rough draft of the assignment and revise.
9) Submit paper to be evaluated.

V. Evaluation

The grade for this assignment should be based primarily on how well the student understands the book he/she has read. In determining his/her understanding of the book, the selection of adjectives and reasons for the selection should be judged according to their appropriateness to the understanding of the character that the student has. Mechanics and effort should also account for a portion of the final grade.

TOPIC: Writing Reports, Reviews, Arguments, Descriptions

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Grades 8-9

# ROMEO AND JULIET IN DOUBLE SUICIDE
## (Writing a News Article on a Scene from a Classic)

## I. Rationale

Writing a news article helps a student understand the difficult task of a journalist in reporting the news. Having to condense and report the events in a literary work just completed helps students gain further insights into the work. They also practice arranging events logically and reporting facts accurately. The assignment may be given after the class has read a play by Shakespeare, a Greek tragedy, The Odyssey, or other appropriate classics. The students will need to read current news articles, discuss the 5 w's and the lead paragraph, and choose a scene to report from an unbiased point of view. This unit may be completed within a week.

## II. Objectives

1) To recognize the form and style of straight news reporting
2) To increase skill in reading the newspaper
3) To practice summarizing passages of literature in newspaper form
4) To recognize the point of view used by the author
5) To practice using standard English in a journalistic format

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Ask students to bring the front page of any recent newspaper.
2) Direct the lead paragraph and discuss the 5 w's (who, what, when, where, why, how?) used in articles. (Use the board or overhead projector.)
3) Divide the class into groups of four or five students to analyze additional articles. Discuss headline writing, also.
4) Discuss literary scenes that could be written as news articles.
5) Assign the task of writing a news article about the particular scene chosen by each student. (Ex., The assassination scene from Julius Caesar, Mercutio's death, or the scene in the tomb from Romeo and Juliet, an adventure of Odysseus. . .)
6) Allow two days for students to write their articles outside of class.
7) Divide the class into small groups to read and criticize each other's rough drafts.
8) Circulate among groups and assist when needed.
9) Read and evaluate final articles.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Take the front page of a recent newspaper to class.
2) Work with a small group dissecting news articles.
3) Select a scene from the literature just completed and report it for a front page article as an unbiased observer would write. Follow the rules for writing the lead paragraph and create a four to six word headline for the article.
4) Share the first draft with a small group and revise according to insights gained from the discussion.
5) Turn in the revised article.

V. Evaluation

Teacher may wish to evaluate students' efforts and participation in small groups in addition to grading the final article. The news article should be graded on clarity, unbiased reporting, accuracy of information, adherence to journalistic style, and acceptable standards of English.

TOPIC: Writing Reports, Reviews, Arguments, Descriptions

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# ENCOUNTERS

## I. Rationale

By reading carefully selected short stories or a novel, students will exhibit empathy with a character. A product of the short story unit will be a diary. Keeping a diary for the duration of the unit will increase the normal writing output of the students, help them to see the format of a diary, and increase student understanding of and empathy with characters in stories.

## II. Objectives

1) To learn the format of a diary
2) To improve all writing skills by writing more frequently
3) To increase the understanding of characters in short stories
4) To increase skills of editing and revision

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Devise a short story unit that includes stories with strong characterization. Some examples might be "The Monkey's Paw," "The Open Window," "The Great Mountains," or the novel Portrait of Jennie.
2) Read these stories, one at a time, in class. Discuss the characters with the class. List examples of strong character traits.
3) Assign to the class the task of keeping a diary.
4) Give to the class and read with them several selections from diaries of famous people. A selection from Anne Frank, perhaps one of her descriptions of an encounter, would be good.
5) Discuss style, flavor, technique, tone and point of view used in a diary.
6) When students read the first story, assign them the task of writing in their diary. They are to write as if they have just met a new person today, a character from the story. They should be told that their encounters will be read by other students.
7) Each time a new story is read, assign the diary writing.
8) Have the students bring their diaries to class to be edited by other students.
9) Have the students evaluate the diaries of each other. Then collect these diaries.
10) Return them to be bound by students and place them in the library, with the librarian's permission.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Read the diary entries presented by the teacher. Discuss orally the style, flavor, technique, tone, and point of view.
2) Read the short story selected by the teacher.
3) As soon as you finish the story, begin your own diary by describing someone from the story. Describe this person as if he/she were real and as if you have had an encounter with him/her today. Write as much as you can about this person.
4) Read the other stories assigned to you; pick a character from each to describe in your diary.
5) When you are finished with your short story unit and when you have written about an encounter with at least one character from each story, bring your diary to class.
6) Share your diary with two other students who will help you to edit and to revise your diary.
7) Give your diary to the teacher.
8) When your diary is returned, revise and rewrite it so that it can be made into a book.
9) Bind your book with wallpaper, cloth, etc.
10) Turn in your book and the teacher will prepare it so that it can be shelved in your school library.

V. Evaluation

When the diaries are collected, they should be graded on the basis of their understanding of the characters they chose to describe. They should be graded also on their use of the format of a diary; on their use of style, flavor, tone, and point of view; on their improvement in writing skills; and on the effectiveness of their editing and revising techniques. Grades should include a separate grade for effort.

TOPIC: Writing Reports, Reviews, Arguments, Descriptions

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Grades 8-9

# AND MY MASCOT IS A PLATYPUS
## (Personal Coat-of-Arms)
-based on an article in Scholastic Voice

## I. Rationale

In order to write, students need to know something about their subject. Writing about their personal coats-of-arms, representing achievements and goals, fits this requirement. Explaining their choices to classmates gives students a reason for writing and ensures an interested audience.

In designing a personal coat-of-arms, students do some soul-searching as they attempt to discover their values and goals. The bonus they receive is new insights about themselves.

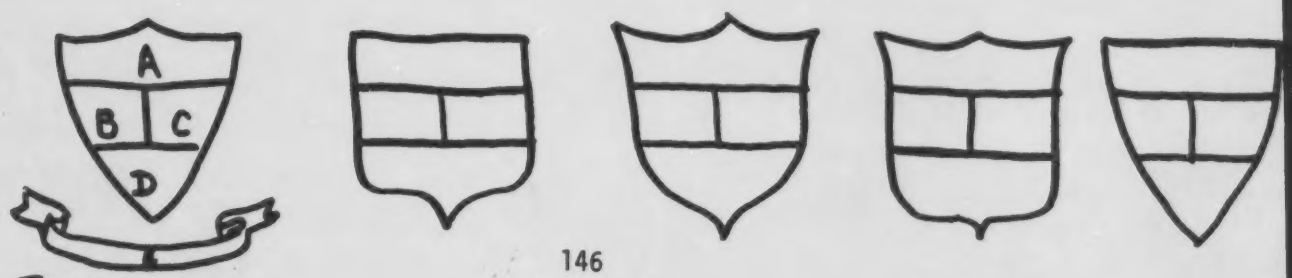
This one week project is designed to include a weekend so that students will have ample time to look for appropriate pictures in old magazines.

## II. Objectives

1) To discover one's values and goals
2) To learn to explain or report in a logical sequence
3) To practice basic writing skills
4) To practice organization within a format
5) To practice writing an explanation for a peer audience
6) To learn to use quotation reference books

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Discuss the use of coats-of-arms throughout the centuries.
2) Explain the method to be used for designing a personal coat-of-arms.
3) Prepare cardboard designs of shields for students to trace. (Draw at least four shapes, approximately notebook paper size. Encourage students to enlarge or alter the shield.)



4) Prepare a ditto with shield format:
   Section A: a picture representing a short-range goal (graduation, skill mastered)
   Section B: picture of a long-range goal (vocation, family, service)
   Section C: picture of an accomplishment the student is proud of (honor roll, getting a job, cycling award, joining the church)
   Section D: picture of a mascot appropriate for the student (cat, owl, snake, dog, turtle)
   Section E: printed quotation on the ribbon that fits the student (give quotation and author).
5) The teacher may want to share his/her own coat-of-arms and quotation as an example.
6) Students may cut pictures from magazines and newspapers, draw their own, or ask friends to sketch them.
7) Explain how to use the quotation references. Guide students in selecting meaningful quotations.
8) Explain the format for writing a composition about the shield.
   Paragraph 1: An introductory explanation of the purpose of the personal coat-of-arms
   Paragraph 2: Explanation of the student's short-range goals as pictured
   Paragraph 3: Explanation of long-range goals
   Paragraph 4: Explanation of the achievement(s)
   Paragraph 5: Explanation of choice of mascot
   Paragraph 6: Explanation of the quotation which should serve as a "clincher" for the composition

8a) Assign a rough draft of the composition to be written at home. Allow class time for small group sharing and editing before the papers are revised.
8b) Have students read final copies orally.
9) Display the shields on the bulletin board after students have shared them.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Participate in class discussion of coats-of-arms.
2) Choose a shield design and trace it. At home transfer the design to cardboard (or plywood).
3) Study the ditto and decide what pictures would be appropriate for each section. Choose a mascot and a quotation.
4) Assemble the shield.
5) Follow the format for the composition. Write a rough draft, using the conventions of standard English.
6) Revise the composition after informal editing by peers.
7) Share the shield and the composition with the class. Decide which portion or portions of both are to be explained and read aloud.
8) Possible follow-up activity for journal writing:
   a) What I discovered about myself while working on this assignment
   b) Insights about fellow classmates.

V. Evaluation

Two grades should be assigned this project: one for effort in preparing the shield, and the second for the composition. Grade on clarity, adherence to format, mechanics, and usage.

TOPIC: Writing Creatively

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Grade 8

# IT LOOKS DIFFERENT FROM HERE

## I. Rationale

Students should become aware that everyone has a point of view, depending on age, experience, background, environment, etc. This activity lets them use their imaginations as well as look at something familiar from a completely different point of view.

## II. Objectives

1) To learn to view an object from an uncommon point of view
2) To learn to write in a narrative from what the mind sees
3) To learn to rewrite and edit with an eye toward the finished product

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Spend a class period with all students thinking aloud and off the tops of their heads about how they would see various things, people, and actions if they were someone or something different. (Examples: Describe a St. Bernard if you were a year-old child. Describe a bicycle if you were a turtle about to be run over by a bicycle.)
2) Tell the student to think of their homes or surrounding areas and choose the oldest or largest tree in this area.
3) Ask the students whether they prefer working alone or with one or two others (no group larger than three). If they wish to pair up, let them decide with whom to work.
4) Lead the students to think of themselves as the trees.
5) Instruct them to write a rough-draft narrative about a year in the life of these trees--feelings and moods during the four seasons, watching people, seeing the environment change.
6) As students work on rough drafts, read and make suggestions for improvement.

## IV. Procedure for Students

1) Decide whether you want to work alone or with others. If not alone, choose your partner or partners.
2) Choose a large tree near your home or school, perhaps one you can climb and from which you can see things from a different angle.
3) Putting yourself in the tree's place, make a list of feelings and moods--things or experiences--that make you happy, sad, etc.

4) Using these feelings, write a story in rough-draft about the life of this tree during a four-season year. Describe its feelings as the seasons change. The tree will become "I" in the story, because you as the writer will become the tree.
5) If you need help or suggestions, ask your teacher.
6) After rewriting and editing, prepare the final draft and hand it in.

V. Evaluation

These should be teacher evaluated, with more emphasis on imagination and use of words than on mechanics. In a group, each partner should get the same grade, no matter how much input he/she had.

TOPIC: Writing Creatively

Becky B. Hawkins
Lowe's Grove Jr. High
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Grades 8-9

# STOP AND SMELL THE ROSES

## I. Rationale

Most of us recognize how much easier it is to write when given a familiar situation. In this lesson, the students are dealing with common experiences--the five senses and the school environment. The teacher has little preparatory work other than notifying other teachers that there may be a little noise in the hall. The assignment can be used with both the slower and quicker students as all answers are pooled on the board. These answers give the less creative students a choice of ideas while at the same time stimulating the more creative students to branch out on their own. The grading system is meant to reinforce the skill of following directions and including those elements required by the teacher.

## II. Objectives

1) To develop a composition by using a familiar environment as motivation
2) To use the five senses, recognizing their importance in the daily routine
3) To practice note-taking as a fore-runner of composition writing
4) To incorporate notes into a composition

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Announce that students will be going for a brief walk down the hall.
2) Stress that while students are walking, they should make written notes on their sensory reactions: what they see, taste, touch, hear and smell. Point out that there should be no talking so that they can effectively record all senses.
3) Lead students on a brief walk in the school halls.
4) Return to class after approximately 10 minutes.
5) Lead students in a discussion of their sensory reactions in the halls.
6) List the responses of the students on the board in five columns labled SEEING, TOUCHING, HEARING, SMELLING, TASTING.

Example:

| SEEING | TOUCHING | HEARING | SMELLING | TASTING |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| old tennis shoe etc. | slick door-knob etc. | pencil sharpener etc. | wax etc. | cold fountain water etc. |

7) Once there is a good list of about six in each column, announce that the students will now use these lists to write a composition.
8) Give the following directions for the composition: "Imagine that you are a roach unable to hide before school begins. You are trapped in the halls for several hours while school is in progress. Once you find your way back home, you have many tales to tell. Your composition is to center around the story you, the roach, tell, and your grade will be based on how well you incorporate the sensory reactions that have been discussed. You may use any of those listed on the board, or you may come up with more of your own. All senses should be covered."
9) Allow the remainder of class time to work on the composition.
10) The following day, give students time to ask questions, to trade papers with one another for comments, and to make final drafts.
11) Take up papers, grade, and return.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Go with the teacher on a walk down the hall, making notes on those things seen, heard, touched, smelled, and tasted. Do not talk during this exercise.
2) After returning to the classroom, participate in a class discussion on those items the students listed, helping the teacher to compile a composite list on the board.
3) Listen to the teacher's directions for the composition to be written.
4) Write a rough draft of the composition, being sure to include all five senses.
5) Bring the composition to class the next day, taking advantage of the given time to rewrite, to ask for suggestions, and to discuss with classmates.
6) Write the final draft and turn it in to the teacher.

V. Evaluation

This composition is graded entirely on the incorporation of the senses. It is suggested that there be at least three examples of each sense although this may vary according to the teacher's discretion. All five senses must be represented and represented well in order to merit an A. If one sense is left out, the grade starts at a B and may be even lower if the remaining four senses are not done as well as expected. The grades could continue down the scale, resulting in failure, if none of the criteria are met. The only exception might be if a student cannot grasp the assignment at all. In such a case, a simpler assignment based only on listing might be an option.

TOPIC: Writing Creatively

Linda Baird
Arndt Middle School
Hickory, NC
Grade 8

# COLORFUL WORDS

## I. Rationale

Filmstrips and stories help to produce an eerie classroom atmosphere. Students are stimulated to think about an assigned topic, "In a Graveyard After Midnight." Teacher questioning develops into a word game. The game requires students to find synonyms using a thesaurus and dictionary. Discussions and games build students' vocabularies. With an unlimited number of descriptive words, the students begin to develop colorful writing.

## II. Objectives

1) To develop interest and enjoyment in creative writing
2) To use more effectively the thesaurus and dictionary for vocabulary development
3) To play games for the purpose of learning
4) To mime words
5) To make appropriate and dramatic word choices

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Choose a story, tape, or filmstrip to set an eerie, mysterious environment.
2) Discuss words to convey ghostly feelings.
3) List the related vocabulary words on the board. (Have the board divided into columns, one for words, the other for synonyms.)
4) Introduce the topic, "In a Graveyard After Midnight."
5) Discuss the topic. Ask questions to stimulate student thinking: Examples
   1) Have you ever been to a graveyard? How did you feel? Why were you there?
   2) Have you ever been there after dark? Would you like to be?
   3) How would you talk or move through a graveyard?
   4) What sounds might you hear?
6) List words and synonyms from the discussion on the board.
7) Give each student a thesaurus and dictionary. Divide the room into two teams. Choose a team captain for the purpose of listing on the board the words with matching synonyms. Allow ten minutes to locate words. The winning team will mime a word for the opposite team to guess.
8) Assign a creative paragraph using the topic in number four. Emphasize the importance of word choice.
9) Allow students to volunteer to read their papers.
10) Give praise and offer suggestions for improvement.

11) Allow students to edit the paragraphs.
12) Allow students three days to write, edit, and revise their papers.
13) Read and evaluate the final paragraphs.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Listen to and discuss the teacher-guided activity.
2) Think of scary words and synonyms for them.
3) Find synonyms for words related to the topic.
4) Use the thesaurus and dictionary for the purpose of finding new words.
5) Play a word game.
6) Mime the list of student-made words.
7) Develop a paragraph using a variety of descriptive words.
8) Read paragraphs orally to the class.
9) Edit another student's paper.
10) Revise papers edited by students and turn in.

V. Evaluation

Three grades will be given: one for class participation; the second for mechanics; and the third for word choices.

TOPIC: Writing Creatively

Faye Dickerson
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Grade 9

# FAIRY TALES MAKE THE NEWS

## I. Rationale

Using something that is familiar to the student as a basis of a writing experience often creates comfort with writing. In this assignment, students are allowed to work with something they know well--the fairy tale.

The student gains an understanding of the elements of a news story through a brief study of it and by writing one based on a familiar tale.

## II. Objectives

1) To develop an understanding of the elements of a news story
2) To learn to write a news story
3) To practice basic writing skills
4) To learn to see an event from a news writer's point of view

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Discuss the elements of a news story. Read an example of a news story and discuss.
2) Discuss a school event that all students know about as it could be written in news story form. List the five "W's" and "H" of a news story and determine the answers to each. (Who? What? When? Why? Where? and How?)
3) Assign the task of writing a fairy tale as a news story. Have students do this in class.
4) Circulate and be available to help any student who needs help.
5) Have students read rough drafts aloud to the class and discuss.
6) Have students revise papers.
7) Collect papers. Read some of revised papers aloud to class.
8) Evaluate papers.
9) Allow approximately one week for this assignment.

## IV. Procedure for Students

1) Participate in a class discussion of the news story.
2) Participate in a class discussion of a school event as it could be written up as a news story.
3) List the five "W's" and "H" included in a lead paragraph and the part of the event that fits each one.
4) Write a fairy tale as a straight news story.

5) Seek teacher assistance during the writing of the paper.
6) Read paper aloud to class and discuss papers of classmates.
7) Revise papers.
8) Submit to teacher on designated day.

V. Evaluation

The overall grade on this assignment should be based on mechanics, the extent to which the student has developed the elements of news writing, and student effort.

TOPIC: Writing Creatively

Linda Baird
Arndt Middle School
Hickory, NC
Grade 8

# A NOVEL AS A STIMULUS

## I. Rationale

A dilemma presents the student with a reason for writing. By reading orally and discussing a dilemma, the students are able to project their feelings and reactions. Role playing is a form of self-expression through which solutions to dilemmas can be found. The purpose of this assignment is for the student to solve the dilemma, to write a skit, and to perform it before an audience.

## II. Objectives

1) To understand problems resulting in a dilemma
2) To recognize a moral dilemma
3) To interact verbally and emotionally through discussions and role playing
4) To search for solutions through the use of knowledge gained from previous experiences
5) To recognize cause and effect
6) To view, think, and write a variety of outcomes to a particular situation

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Read orally to the students portions of Richie to arouse their interest.
2) Assign the remainder of a condensed version to be read silently.
3) Choose a moral dilemma for the students to act out. (Example: the first time Richie smoked "pot".)
4) Assign the students a skit to write relating a moral dilemma.
5) Group children into fours for the purpose of choosing the best of their four papers.
6) Each group will edit their four papers, choosing one to be submitted to the teacher for duplication.
7) Collect and evaluate all students' papers.
8) Allow seven days for the total assignment.

## IV. Procedure for Students

1) Read Richie.
2) Act out the moral dilemma given by the teacher.
3) Choose a dilemma and write a skit.
4) Edit and revise the skits.
5) Write the selected skits on a stencil.
6) Present the skits.

V. Evaluation

One grade will be given to each child on the content of his/her paper; one will be given for mechanics.

TOPIC: Writing Creatively

Linda Baird
Arndt Middle School
Hickory, NC
Grade 8

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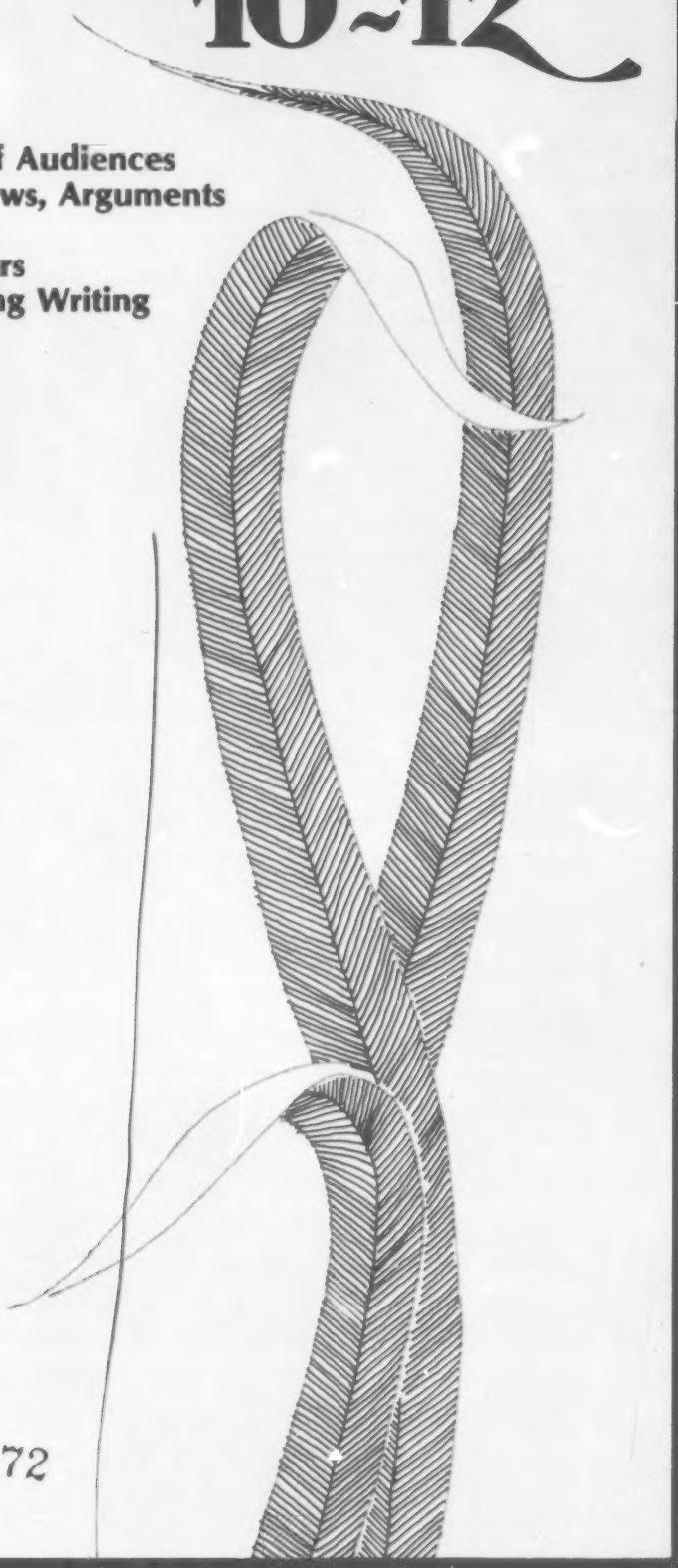
V. Evaluation

One grade will be given to each child on the content of his/her paper; one will be given for mechanics.

# Grades 10-12

- Motivating Writing
- Writing for Varieties of Audiences
- Writing Reports, Reviews, Arguments
- Writing Creatively
- Writing Research Papers
- Approaches to Teaching Writing



TOPIC: Motivating Writing

Mildred E. Modlin
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Wilmington, NC 28401
Grades 10-12

# MOTIVATING WRITING FROM MORE THAN ONE POINT OF VIEW

## I. Rationale

Choosing the appropriate point of view from which to tell a narrative can be discovered by students without the use of textbooks or formal terms. The teacher should stage confrontation with one student in the classroom. It is important for it to be unexpected and heated. When students are asked to record what they have seen, those listening, the one involved, and the one sent outside the room just before the dramatic attack will all write in different styles and record different conversation snatches and emotional reactions.

During the class discussion which follows the writing, time and space relationships of the writer to the incident will become obvious to students. They will also become aware of the inaccuracies of their observations and learn to have an understanding of those who saw an incident and reported it in a way foreign to their own.

## II. Objectives

1) To develop an awareness of time and space relationships of the writer to his/her subject matter
2) To sharpen powers of observation
3) To involve all students in individual and group experiences
4) To learn to see an incident from more than one viewpoint
5) To gain understanding of and appreciation for viewpoints with which one does not agree
6) To develop the practice of seeking editorial advice
7) To learn the art of offering editorial advice in a positive manner
8) To practice and understand the value of revision

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Send one student into the hall to read or work. Leave classroom door open.
2) Send another on an errand to library.
3) Before beginning class formally, verbally abuse a student in a rather loud voice or stage some dramatic confrontation.
4) When student returns from library, call student in from the hall and ask students to write an account of what has just happened. The one in the hall may not ask questions but must write only what he/she overheard. The one who went to the library may ask three students.
5) Allow 20 minutes for writing.
6) Share papers and discuss the incident.
7) Discuss differences in accounts of the participant, the observers, the keyhole observer, and the third person removed.

8) Have class decide which point of view would be best if an author had these pruposes in mind:

   a) To criticize teachers
   b) To write a moral story on temper control
   c) To talk about self-image.

9) Explore viewpoints students remember from literature.
10) Ask students to revise their first account, changing point of view if they wish and adding details they had missed.
11) The next class session ask each student to have his or her paper read and critiqued by a student who wrote from the same point of view and one who wrote from a different point of view.
12) Circulate among students, acting as consultant.
13) Allow two nights for students to revise rough drafts and complete final copies.
14) During class periods assign the reading of two short stories obviously controlled by point of view. "Death of a Tsotsi" by Alan Paton is excellent. Discuss vocabulary, dialect, style and theme as related to point of view.
15) Explore changes in the areas mentioned if the story had been told by a different character.
16) Collect and evaluate papers the day after literary discussions.
17) Encourage students to write another paper from a different point of view, using a story read or an incident of one's own choosing.
18) Display as many papers as possible on bulletin board and invite further discussions.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Write an account of the incident staged in class.
2) Participate in discussion of the incident.
3) Record notes on points of view illustrated.
4) Develop a revised rough draft.
5) Ask two students to edit the paper.
6) Read accounts of two classmates and offer suggestions.
7) Consult teacher when problems arise.
8) Revise the rough draft as a homework assignment.
9) Read stories in class and participate in discussion.
10) Submit a final draft.
11) Write an additional point of view paper (optional).
12) Read student papers on display.

V. Evaluation

Two grades are given on the paper. One evaluates appropriate choice of point of view and accuracy in recording the speaker's knowledge. The other evaluates mechanics that have been taught in the class as essential in all composition. Classroom reading and discussion are factors in determining final grade period averages.

TOPIC: Motivating Writing

Mary W. Mintz
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Grades 10-12

# FOXFIRE-TYPE INTERVIEW

## I. Rationale

This activity is designed to catch some of the motivation and the popularity of the Foxfire approach to learning. Even if the material is never published, students will enjoy going through the pre-writing process. The main idea is to have students interview special persons as though they are to write a feature article or something similar for publication. In this way they will have a real experience, which is definitely basic for any kind of composition.

In setting up this type of activity for composition, other benefits will accrue. Students will have to learn something about interviewing techniques. They will have the chance to practice listening and speaking skills in a meaningful situation. In talking with members of the older generations, they will possibly see a new side of the person of which they had not been aware. This may lead to greater respect and concern on the part of the youth for the "old folk."

Also students may feel satisfaction in preserving oral history that could be lost if it were not for this project. Such satisfaction is helpful in developing a positive self-image and is the kind of activity in which all students may feel success, no matter their capabilities. Certainly this is a good way to motivate and create, for some at least, a memorable experience.

## II. Objectives

1) To practice the techniques of interviewing
2) To practice the skills of speaking and listening, emphasizing those social standards acceptable to older people
3) To foster a concern for the preservation of oral history and an understanding of the values of older people and their customs
4) To select topics for conversation suitable for the specific audience
5) To enjoy and appreciate dialectical differences that might be encountered
6) To recognize nonverbal communication and its relationship to the processes of communication

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Begin by having the class discuss Foxfire and other similar projects. Let students tell what they know about these projects. Fill in the gaps with books, clippings, etc., so that the class will become knowledgeable and interested in the crafts, personalities, legends, etc., found in such publications and in the feature articles of many

newspapers. Exciting parts could be read aloud. Often students will respond by saying, "I know somebody just like that." Or "I know somebody who can do that." Hopefully the students will "ask" for the assignment.

2) Discuss also the importance of preservation of local history and lore.
3) On perhaps the second day, begin preparation for the students to set up an interview with a special person.
3) Have students learn (or review) techniques of interviewing. This may be discussed and then practiced by using role-playing. For this, the class may be divided into groups of three or four.
4) At some time, the students let the teacher know what person they are to contact. (It is recommended that for their first experience, students choose someone who has a built-in interest in the students, like a grandparent, other older relative, or kindly neighbor or friend. Such a person will be more understanding and more helpful to the students.) Probably the students would like to work in groups of two or three (not more than four) when they go for the interview. Each group should work together in class to develop a list of questions to be used. The teacher may help students formulate questions that call for long answers. The questions which may be answered with a yes or no are of little value in such an interview. If possible, students should know beforehand something about their special person. For example, if he is a veteran of a war, they could ask him to tell some of his war stories. If he/she has some hobby, they could talk about that. Other questions sometimes referred to as "personality" questions are like these: What advice could you give young people today? What is your most valuable possession? Do you prefer city life to country life? What is your definition of success? How has religion affected your life?
5) The practical problem of making sure students have cassettes (or whatever device they plan to use) and that they know how to use them and how to record identifying material on the tape must be taken care of also.
6) The teacher should review certain aspects of speaking and listening skills, especially those relating to courtesy and socially acceptable conduct.
7) The teacher may, if thought appropriate, review some aspects of non-verbal communication and its relationship to the process of communication.
8) After students have brought in their tapes, some time should be spent sharing them in the classroom. This could be done in groups. One suggestion is to have each group choose a short segment that they liked best to play for the entire class.
9) By all means, have students write a note of thanks to their special person.

Follow-up Activities

These could include transcribing the tape and/or editing it as for publication. (Sometimes the school newspaper could use such a feature article or even the local newspaper, if in a small town.)

Other follow-up composition assignments may include writing character sketches, description of setting and/or physical appearance of person, narrative account of the entire experience, demonstration with oral or written explanation if a craft was a major part of the interview, or reaction in poetry.

IV. Procedure for Student

1) Participate in initial discussions relating to Foxfire projects.
2) Choose a special person to interview.
3) Make plans with two or three others to carry out the interview.
4) Learn what you can about the person before the interview.
5) Formulate questions for the interview.
6) Learn interviewing techniques and practice them in class.
7) Make a definite appointment for the interview and be prompt in arrival.
8) Arrange to use a cassette. Make sure it is working properly.
9) Review listening and speaking skills needed, particularly those dealing with good manners and courtesy.
10) Carry out the interview and take the tape to class next day.
11) Share with the class, as directed by the teacher.
12) Write a note of thanks to the person interviewed. Review letter writing techniques if necessary.
13) Use one or more of the follow-up writing activities that the teacher may suggest.
14) Participate in group evaluation as directed by the teacher.

V. Evaluation

Evaluation will vary according to the teacher and the grading system used within the school. Elements for consideration of a letter grade or a number grade should include participation in the preparation activities, quality of interview questions used, quality of material on the tape, grade arrived at by peer judgment, and any of the follow-up writing.

TOPIC: Motivating Writing

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Grades 9-12

# SENSORY AWARENESS

## I. Rationale

When teaching descriptive writing, a teacher wants more from a student than flowery phrases and mushy adjectives. The teacher wants description, but getting students to the point of knowing what descriptive writing involves is often a problem.

One way to improve descriptive writings among students is to increase their sensory awareness and how their five senses are used daily. By concentrating on imaginative and tangible experiences and activities, the students will compile lists of sensory words, words which describe the situations they are encountering.

The five lists, one for each sense, may be compiled as an individual or as a group, depending on how well class members interact; however, group interaction may lend itself more to sensory awareness through the simple process of sharing experiences.

After the lists have been compiled and discussed for originality, the motivating activity is completed; however, this pre-writing activity could be supplemented with many writing assignments involving the sensory words. One might be to choose ten words from one of the lists and to write a paragraph on a situation where that sense is the dominant idea or the "central character." The discretion of the teacher mandates the writing assignment.

## II. Objectives

1) To participate in activities which will increase sensory awareness
2) To expand the vocabulary
3) To engage in an active learning experience

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Define and discuss descriptive writing.
2) Discuss the importance of sensory awareness.
3) Divide the students into groups of five or six.
4) Allow two days for this activity.
5) Provide tangible and imaginative experiences to promote keener sensory awareness within the students.
   a) Blindfold a student in each group. Ask him/her to describe in one-word terms an object unidentified to him/her: a lemon,

for example. Ask the student to describe texture, smell, taste, etc. Adapt the activity to other objects (a bowl of pudding, a tennis ball, a jar of horseradish, etc.).

b) Play a sound effects record for the class. Ask each student to describe in one-word terms the sounds.

c) Narrate situations the students have probably never experienced: a ship wreck, lost in the desert, a bank robbery, a murder trial, winning a lottery, etc. Ask the students to record in one-word terms their reactions to each narration. Include many situations within each narrative that will evoke emotional responses from each of the five senses. (These exercises may be for the individual or group.)

6) Collect the completed lists and compile composite lists. Avoid duplication of words within each sense list, however, the same word may appear in more than one list; distribute to students.

7) Discuss the lists with the students. Include originality and emotional response in the discussion.

8) Permit student interaction in recounting emotional involvement during the sensory exercises.

OPTIONAL:

9) Continue with a writing assignment after pre-writing has been completed.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Take notes on the teacher's explanation of descriptive writing.
2) Join the group you have been assigned.
3) Actively participate in the sensory awareness activities your teacher has provided.
4) Compile, individually or as a group member, a list of words which appeal to each of the five senses.
5) Discuss with your classmates and teacher why you selected your sensory words and your emotional responses during the exercises.

V. Evaluation

Class participation and interaction will be the strong elements of evaluation. The effort put forth in compiling the lists will also be considered. There is no other writing assignment.

TOPIC: Motivating Writing

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Buxton, NC 27920
Grades 9-12

# PLAYING THE PARTS OF THE PARAGRAPH

## I. Rationale

A quick, uninhibiting way to get students motivated to write is through some group activity. In this activity students are assigned a topic and given roles to play in the formation of a paragraph. The organization of the paragraph is reflected in their own effort of cooperation. The length of this activity is one class session.

## II. Objectives

1) To learn or review the basic organization of the paragraph, including the concepts of topic sentence, details, and concluding sentence
2) To learn sequencing
3) To explore the possibilities of different arrangements within the paragraph

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Introduce or reintroduce to the students the concepts of topic sentence, details, and concluding sentence by copying on index cards sentences from selected paragraphs and distributing them at random to small groups of students.
2) Direct the students to arrange the cards into the best sequence, disucssing and deciding this as a group.
3) Ask one student from each group to copy down their completed paragraph on the board.
4) Discuss the parts of the paragraph with the students, checking to see that they understand the concepts listed above. These may be further illustrated by visual materials.
5) Assign a variety of topics and distribute index cards identifying the roles the students are to play in the cooperative writing of a paragraph. One card will read "topic sentence," another "concluding sentence," and the rest "detail."
6) Ask the students to revise their paragraph until it reads as though written by one person and to write their final product on the board.
7) Take up all the groups' work, seeing that their signatures are on it.

## IV. Procedure for Students

1) Read and discuss the sentence your teacher has given you with your group and indicate the best place for your sentence in the total sequence.
2) Write down the completed paragraph on a sheet of paper and on the blackboard.
3) Explain why you chose the sequence you did and why you felt it was the best possible sequence.

4) Write a sentence of the type described on the card you have been given. The sentence should relate to the one topic your group has agreed on.
5) Discuss with your group the best place for your sentence in the total sequence and write a paragraph using all the sentences.
6) Read aloud the finished paragraph and discuss ways in which the paragraph could be revised to read as though written by one person.
7) Write the finished paragraph on the board and on a separate sheet of paper, to be handed in along with all the other material of your group.

V. Evaluation

This short lesson need not be graded since it is only a part of the whole writing process that you are trying to emphasize here. Your main concern is getting the student to write and making him/her feel comfortable about writing.

TOPIC: Motivating Writing

Mildred G. Ogletree
Columbia High School
Columbia, NC 27925
Grades 8 and 10-11

# TRIAL BY WRITING

## I. Rationale

This exercise requires students to report accurately and colorfully on one aspect of a courtroom trial they observe in person. The viewing of a trial should motivate most junior high and high school students because of the drama involved in even minor litigation and because of the opportunity students have to leave the classroom to learn.

## II. Objectives

1) To practice observing, using especially sight and hearing
2) To practice the selection of one aspect of a whole as a topic
3) To practice reproducing an event as accurately, completely, and colorfully as possible
4) To practice the writing skills of unity, coherence and emphasis
5) To practice basic writing skills, such as spelling, capitalization, and sentence structure.
6) To practice editing skills through rewriting.

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Make the necessary arrangements for the visit and for the writing assignment:

   a) Contact the judge, clerk of court, or prosecutor to arrange for the class to visit court for about two hours
   b) Make the necessary arrangements with school personnel and, if necessary, parents
   c) Review or have a resource person (lawyer) review courtroom procedure and the roles of the various participants in a trial. Hand to students a simple diagram of the courtroom they are to visit and allow them to study it as they are learning about procedure and roles.
   d) An alternative step here would allow students to find the information in step (c) for themselves and present it to the class
   e) Announce to students that they will be expected to write a report about something they see and hear during the trial. Remind them to watch and listen very carefully.
   f) Explain proper courtroom behavior and insist that they observe it.

2) Visit a courtroom during a trial. Perhaps there will be time to talk with the judge or prosecutor so that you and the students can ask questions, either during or after the visit.

3) Return to the classroom:

a) Allow students to comment freely on any aspect of the visit for about 15 minutes.
b) Announce that they are to write in class 300-500 words on any one aspect of their visit. For example, they could choose to summarize the evidence presented for one side or describe one of the participants in the trial. To help students get the feel of the assignment, ask them to imagine they are newspaper reporters.
c) Ask the students to be accurate, to include many specific details, and to use a variety of descriptive words and phrases
d) You may suggest that their reports answer the five w's: who, what, where, when, and why
e) Review unity, coherence, and emphasis
f) As students write, circulate among them to offer assistance
g) Collect papers in two or three days
h) On the day the paper is due, have the entire class sit in one large circle. Arbitrarily pass out the papers you've collected, making sure no one receives his/her own
i) Each student should read the paper he received and on it make one comment about the paper's strengths and one suggestion for improvement
j) This activity should continue until each student has read four or five papers. The class will lose interest if you continue during the same class period. If you feel that this activity is worthwhile, try it again on the following day for the same length of time.
k) Allow students the rest of the class period for rewriting
l) Collect the final drafts for evaluation two or three days later
m) Display the best papers in the room
n) Share all or some of the papers with the judge and/or lawyers if you think they are interested and if the student authors are willing.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Visit a courtroom to observe a trial. Observe proper behavior. Listen and watch very carefully.
2) When you return to the classroom, participate in a general class discussion of the trial.
3) Choose one aspect of your experience.
4) Write a 300-500 word report on that aspect, being as accurate, specific, complete, and colorful as you can. Keep in mind the skills of unity, coherence, and emphasis.
5) If the teacher has asked, check to make sure your report answers the five w's: what, where, when, who why.
6) If you need help, ask the teacher.
7) Turn in the paper when it is due.
8) Participate in the circle activity, which requires you to comment on the strengths of classmates' reports and to make suggestions for improvements.
9) Consider the suggestions offered you and rewrite your report.
10) Hand in the final draft for evaluation.

11) If you wish, agree to share your report with the judge and lawyers who participated in the trial you witnessed.

V. Evaluation

This paper should be evaluated primarily on the basis of accuracy, completeness, unity, and use of descriptive detail. Secondly, it should be graded for coherence and emphasis, and finally for mechanics. Perhaps the first category should count 50 percent of the total grade; the second, 30 percent; and the third, 20 percent.

TOPIC: Motivating Writing

DeComa Lane
Parkland Senior High School
Winston-Salem, NC
Grades 10-11

# AMERICAN GRAFFITI

## I. Rationale

Graffiti is so prevalent in America and is so expressive of the sentiment of the regions in which it is read. Some people consider it the most valid pulse of the people and an art form. Who can resist reading what's scribbled on a wall, a garbage can or a bus?

Many communities couldn't "beat it" so they joined it by framing walls with cheerful colors and focusing on the graffiti. Since students do read graffiti,we should use it to our advantage as opposed to writing it off as "junk." Tenses, subject and verb agreement, vocabulary builders, news items, etc. all can be discussed using graffiti.

## II. Objectives

1) To get students to write
2) To increase students' vocabulary
3) To practice very basic writing skills
4) To allow for expression
5) To encourage reading
6) To provide a sense of success and enjoyment

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Cover entire wall with a roll of paper and have several different colors of "mark-a-lot" pens.
2) Ask for definition of graffiti.
3) Tell students this is a graffiti wall and that they may write on it (caution against profanity).
4) Ask students for some poems or cute sayings they have read by way of graffiti. (You may recall some and share those with the class.)
5) Tell students that they are to read graffiti wherever they see it and that they are to copy the words they do not understand, the passages that they liked, the ones that deal with some news issue, etc.
6) If they think of something clever they should write it on the wall.
7) Ask why they think people spend their time composing graffiti? Is there anything good about it? Is it an attempt to communicate? If so, to whom?, etc. (Let them write their answers.)
8) Have one corner of wall where they can go to write words they didn't understand. On a specific day discuss and define those words.
9) Check students collections weekly by reading and discussing with them what they mean. You will find they've read quite a lot.

10) Give spelling test on all of the words.
11) Have students write letters to the local paper, expressing their views on graffiti in their city. Have student editors make comments.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Discuss the graffiti you have seen with the class.
2) Write whatever you'd like to on the graffiti wall, within reason
3) Write a paper on what you think about graffiti. Is it good, bad, all right, an outlet for society?
4) Collect and record on paper graffiti that you read and place it in your folder.
5) Write in the designated space on the wall words you did not understand.
6) After a while you are to write a letter to the local paper expressing your views on graffiti.
7) Allow another student to read and make comments on your letter.
8) Revise your letter.
9) Submit to teacher for revision, comments, etc.
10) Mail to the local paper.

V. Evaluation

Give daily grades for this assignment based on class participation, collecting of graffiti, writing on the wall, and spelling, and then give one final grade for the letter to the paper.

TOPIC: Motivating Writing

Tom E. Orr
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Hendersonville, NC 28739
Grades 10-12

# MAKING THUMBPRINTS ON THE WORLD

## I. Rationale

Arthur Miller has said that his play Death of a Salesman grew from simple images: images of futility, images of aging, and images of people. The play grew from a need greater than hunger and thirst, a need for immortality: "a need to leave a thumbprint on the world--to carve your name in a block of ice on a hot July afternoon."

Students need to develop concepts, images, and symbols adequate to give significance to their experiences. Mary L. Thompson, in the article "Symbolic Immortality: A New Approach to the Study of Death" (Media and Methods, February 1977), presents three sets of opposites in the imagery of life and death and how they endure through life. The three sets of opposites around which images of life and death are organized are: connection--separation, movement--stasis, and integrity--disintegration. The process of gathering this imagery Ms. Thompson calls "symbolic immortality."

Students need to realize the human desire to feel an attachment to the human flow, or a sense of historical connection beyond one's own life.

The purposes of this assignment are as follows: 1) to read several significant literary works, including the American drama Death of a Salesman, and to discuss the ideas of "symbolic immortality" expressed in these words; and 2) to have the students identify and to write about the imagery of life and death in their own experience.

## II. Objectives

1) To learn how the three sets of opposites operate in a person's life and how these sets of opposites endure through life
2) To choose some aspect of "symbolic immortality" upon which to base writing experiences
3) To share life experiences
4) To demonstrate how life-death imagery is expressed in these five modes: biological, creative, theological, natural, and experiential
5) To read selections of poetry and prose in which some significant aspect of "symbolic immortality" is represented

III. Procedures for Teacher

1) Assign Death of a Salesman for reading; play record of play (Lee J. Cobb and Mildred Dunnoch).
2) Distribute questions for discussion:
   (e.g. 1. Willy says all things are used up by the time they are paid for. How does this apply to Willy's life? To your life?

   10. Do you think Willy is typical of modern American man? Why? Why not?
3) Go over important speeches in the play (Willy's scene with Howard; "The Requium"--Linda, Charlie, Biff, and Hap; etc.)
4) Explain the five modes of life-death imagery:
   a) BIOLOGICAL--family and generational continuity
      (e.g. Alex Hailey's Roots)
   b) THEOLOGICAL--spiritual death and rebirth
      (e.g. T. S. Eliot's "The Wasteland")
   c) CREATIVE--attempts to leave lasting influences
      (e.g. works of art, music, literature)
   d) NATURAL--continuity with nature
      (e.g. Henry D. Thoreau, Robert Frost, others)
   e) EXPERIENTIAL--psychological state; occurs in relation to the other four; necessary, perhaps, to integrate them into our lives
      (e.g. James Joyce's Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man).
5) Allow students through class discussion to discover examples of life-death imagery in their own experience:
   a) A child pops a balloon or accidentally releases it into the air. The child cries: "Balloon gone."
   b) Two young lovers have a quarrel and "break up."
   c) A favorite pet is killed by a passing car.
   d) The day you "get your head together"
   e) OTHER.
6) Present Abraham Maslow's "peak experiences"; William Wordsworth's "spots in time"; and James Joyce's "epiphanies."
7) Assign one or more of the following:
   a) Choose an idea, something you "know about," and write a paper in which you make clear exactly how the idea is connected with your life as you are living it--"something knitted into your very being."
   b) Create something in an art form besides literature.
   c) Trace your family tree.
   d) React to the following statement by Theodore Roethke: "Adolescence is an ill-defined dying."
   e) Isolate an early memory; a "peak experience," or an epiphanous moment.
   f) Write an original poem or a first-person narrative.
      Note: Here is a poem written for this assignment:

A MISSED TURNING

A tall shadow rubbing snugly
against the East;
a story told without words.

A hug and a kiss, and
the Winter came before the Fall,
and the leaves missed their turning.

How desperately they cling,
but a parting wind sends them on.

You go too.

--Tim Bethea (grade 12)

g) Try to put into words an emerging thought or half-formed idea.

8) Take students on a field trip to observe in nature the imagery of death-life.

9) Invite senior citizens to classroom; take students to visit kindergarten or first grade classroom. Writing Assignment:

Describe a scene the way you think a child, a teenager, an adult and a senior citizen would see it. A good setting might be a department store, a busy park, or fans at a ballgame.

10) Have values clarification sessions.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Read Death of a Salesman or assigned literary work.
2) Answer questions from study sheets and participate in class discussions.
3) Complete writing assignments (e.g. "Ineffable Experience").
4) Begin reading from teacher-prepared list.

Note: The implications of this unit, only touched upon here, suggest numerous opportunities for students to write--themes about literature and personal experience--using all forms of discourse. The significance of any such writing assignment, if the student can relate it to his/her own world, is that it will enable him/her to crystalize and to objectify experience.

V. Evaluation

These papers should be evaluated primarily on the basis of clarity and depth of insight. Mark usage and mechanical errors, but grade for these errors in other papers.

TOPIC: Motivating Writing

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Grades 8 and 10-11

# GEARING UP FOR WRITING

## I. Rationale

This writing exercise asks students to write a dialogue between a car or motorcycle and its owner. Cars and motorcycles are two items that engage the attention of almost all junior high and high school students. Conversation is another vital part of their lives and, therefore, is a writing device that most can feel comfortable with. All junior high and below average senior high students should enjoy this activity. And because its focus is on making writing fun, the activity is especially appropriate for the beginning of the year.

## II. Objectives

1) To practice writing dialogue that makes use of colorful words and phrases
2) To learn the mechanics of writing conversation
3) To practice using the skills of unity, coherence, and organization
4) To practice basic writing skills, such as spelling and capitalization

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Collect pictures of cars and motorcycles. Display these as a bulletin board collage.
2) Collect seven or eight short stories and poems about cars and motorcycles. Here are three suggestions: "Buick," a poem by Karl Shapiro (can be found in Shapiro, Poems, 1940-53); 52 Miles to Terror, a collection of short stories published by Scholastic Book Services; Checkered Flag Series, Bowmar series on Motorcycles, Motorbikes, etc.
3) Divide the class into groups of 3-5 and assign each group one of the short stories or poems to read and discuss. Each group should prepare an oral presentation to the entire class of a summary of the selection the group wishes to make. Allow one and one-half to two class periods for this activity.
4) Have each group present its report. The poetry groups should read their poems aloud and may wish to distribute copies of their poems to the members of the class. An accurate plot summary should be enough for each short story group.
5) Allow the class to react to each group's report. The group leader and the teacher should direct the discussion. Lead students to compare and contrast the content, the point of view, and the diction of each selection. Point out colorful language, especially in conversation.

6) At the end of the third class period, tell the students that during the next two class periods, they will write a one to two page dialogue between a car or motorcycle and its owner. They are to think about the assignment overnight.
7) Then announce and display somewhere these requirements for the assignment:

   a) The dialogue must deal with only one conflict or one shared interest between the owner and vehicle.
   b) The dialogue must have a beginning, middle, and end.
   c) The dialogue should be colorful.
   d) It should be written accurately. In other words, the student should demonstrate that he/she has mastered both the skills necessary to write conversation and the basic writing skills of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, etc.
   e) The conversation should flow smoothly and naturally as one speaker talks with the other (coherence).
   f) The dialogue is due in one week.

8) Allow students the rest of this class period and one more to work on the dialogue. Circulate among them to help.
9) Encourage students to proofread and rewrite. They may share papers with other students if they wish.
10) Collect the papers for final evaluation.
11) After evaluating the papers, but before returning them to the class, select several of the best and ask the authors to select partners. Each pair should practice and then read the dialogues to the class. Allow the class time to react.
12) An alternative step here would allow the students to choose the best dialogues after hearing all of them read. The students should give specific reasons for their choices.
13) Return the dialogues to the class. Allow students who wish another opportunity to rewrite their papers.
14) Collect any rewritten work two or three days later.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Collect pictures of cars and motorcycles for a class collage.
2) Participate in the reading and discussion of the poem or short story assigned to your group.
3) Participate in the class discussion of each group report.
4) Study and master the skills of writing conversationally.
5) Write a dialogue between a car or motorcycle and its owner. Incorporate the requirements as outlined by the teacher.
6) Consult with the teacher if you have problems. You may also consult a classmate.
7) Proofread and rewrite your paper. Hand it in.
8) Participate in the reading of your paper and/or listen to the reading of others.
9) If asked to do so, participate in the selection of the best dialogues.
10) After listening closely to the work of classmates, rewrite your dialogue if you feel that you can improve it.
11) Hand in the rewritten draft if you did one.

V. Evaluation

Because the focus of this assignment is motivation, the dialogue should be graded primarily on its originality and flavor, secondarily on unity, coherence, and organization, and finally on mechanics.

TOPIC: Motivating Writing

Charles W. Sanders
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Grades 10-11

# CONTROVERSY AS A WRITING STIMULUS

## I. Rationale

Students are likely to be inclined to write when they see that writing is meaningful to them. Writing is likely to be meaningful to students if it is relevant--if it concerns things touching their personal lives. Since controversy readily stimulates interest, the teacher can make a meaningful writing assignment after asking students to inform themselves about some current controversial issues ("busing," capital punishment, censorship, child pornography, or ERA). These issues affect the students' personal lives; hence, they can see writing about them as relevant--meaningful.

To inform themselves about some controversial issues, students may listen to the radio, read newspapers and periodicals, interview people, or watch television. The purpose of this motivational task is to cause students to become excited about what is going on around them for their later involvement in writing about these things. At the same time, students are sharpening their skills in listening, reading, speaking, taking notes, thinking, and viewing.

## II. Objectives

1) To understand the meaning of the word controversy
2) To recognize the duty of being an informed citizen
3) To learn to be probing, questioning, thinking individuals
4) To sharpen skills in listening, reading, speaking, taking notes, and viewing
5) To appreciate writing as an excellent means of expressing feeling, informing others, and persuading others

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Help students to a thorough understanding of the word controversy.
2) Assign students the job of informing themselves about a controversial issue, requiring each student to do the assignment individually. If necessary, take students to the library.
3) Allow three days for students to investigate the controversy of their choice.
4) Allow one class period (fifty to fifty-five minutes) for discussion of the controversial issues, letting students suggest some forms that written reactions to these issues might take. For example, students could write poems, short stories, essays, letters, and themes.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Choose a controversial issue to investigate.
2) Take notes on that issue from listening to the radio, interviewing persons, reading, and watching television. Notes should cover both sides of the issue.
3) Participate in class discussion of the controversial issues selected, suggesting forms that written reactions to these issues might take.
4) Write and rewrite, using suggestions for revision from fellow classmates.
5) Hand in the finished product.

V. Evaluation

Eighty percent of the grade will be for content; twenty percent, for mechanics.

TOPIC: Motivating Writing

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Grades 10-12

# NEWSPAPER PICTURES AS A WRITING STIMULUS

## I. Rationale

Asking students to discover the difference between accurate and inaccurate statements through a newspaper picture collection that will support certain generalizations is a "fun," yet relevant, way to introduce an analytical writing assignment. Identifying and evaluating in written form the differences between misleading and accurate statements sharpens not only the student's process of critical thinking, but also his/her ability to communicate this thinking effectively to others. The student must recognize that generalizations tend to evade much of the truth.

## II. Objectives

1) To learn to view, to think, and to write with a reasonable degree of analytical skill
2) To use the newspaper to discover the realities of today's world
3) To learn to write an analytical paragraph
4) To practice basic writing skills (capitalization, sentence and paragraph development, punctuation, spelling, diction)
5) To appreciate the value of revision as necessary to polished writing

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Ask students to bring copies of newspapers (preferably dailies of recent date) to class the following day.
2) Collect an additional supply, along with nine pairs of scissors, an assortment of construction paper, and tape.
3) On the given date divide students into three groups, giving each group extra papers, ten sheets of construction paper, tape, and three pairs of scissors.
4) Give to each group one of the following typed and numbered generalizations: #1 Life is beautiful./ #2 Life is ugly./ #3 Life is challenging.
5) Tell students they are not to share statements with anyone but members of their group.
6) Assign students the task of finding pictures from their newspapers that will prove the statement given to their group.
7) Instruct each group to select the ten pictures they feel will best justify their generalizations, mount these pictures on construction paper, and quickly plan a format to present their "case" orally, using each member in some way.
8) Allow an overnight preparation for presentations.
9) Call for students to give their presentations in the order of their numbered statements. (Insist that they enthusiastically support their generalization even though they may not accept it as absolute truth.)

10) Hold a class discussion leading students to see that two of the statements are only half-truths and one is accurate. Explore the need for being a discriminating thinker.

*11) Tell students to write an analytical paper (due in one week) about one of the following quotations which they should examine for sound reasoning: "'Fool,' my muse said to me, 'Look into your heart and write.'" (Sir Philip Sidney)/ "A little learning is a dangerous thing." (Alexander Pope)/ "Experience is a hard school, but a fool will learn in no other." (Benjamin Franklin)/ "None but the brave deserve the fair." (John Dryden)

12) Provide one day for student-exchange and teacher evaluation (three students per group).

13) Adjust due date to conditions of papers on this day.

*At this point, the assignment could go in many different directions other than the one indicated depending, of course, on the direction which the discussion takes.

III. Procedure for Students

1) Read statement given and discuss meaning with group members.
2) Search newspaper for appropriate pictures to prove your generalization (statement) is true.
3) Mount with tape on construction paper the ten best pictures to support your statement.
4) Decide within group on format to use for justifying the accuracy of your statement, assigning each member some specific part in the presentation. (Reading statement with introductory comments/ Picture presentations with comments (one or two per student)/ Concluding remarks geared to convince classmates that your generalization is absolute truth whether you believe it or not)
5) Prepare individual presentation at home.
6) In the group presentation to class, aggressively defend assigned generalization as accurate.
7) Participate in class discussion.
8) Search for clues to identify sound reasoning.
9) Accurately record instruction for writing analytical paper.
10) Clarify any uncertainties about assignment (format/organization/ content/etc.)
11) Arrange private conferences with teacher if needed.

V. Evaluation

Student and teacher oral evaluations, a class vote for best presentation, and teacher evaluation of effort (as well as ability to recognize and use logical thinking) will all be considered in final letter grades given by the teacher. Two grades will be given as follows: 1) Group grade determined by student-teacher evaluations and class vote 2) Individual grades determined by teacher evaluation of effort and student's ability to recognize and use logical thinking.

TOPIC: Writing Arguments

Phyllis F. Sinclair
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Grade 10

# TAKE A STAND FOR YOUR MAN

## I. Rationale

Using the play Julius Caesar as a rich source of characters--Caesar, Brutus, Antony, Cassius, and Octavius--who bear remarkable resemblances to our present day political leaders in their strengths and weaknesses of character, the teacher asks students to make an argument for one of these Romans who have been reincarnated as the five candidates for President of the United States in this year's election. Invariably the first student reaction is that none of the men would be a good choice because they all have flaws; however, a quick reflection on the hopefuls in our most recent election convinces them that none of them were perfect. At this point students can begin to formulate opinions about how they would rank the condidates and what criteria they would apply in deciding how to vote. Once each student is committed to a leader, his task is to present his argument in support of that man. The technique of argument is one that students will undoubtedly have need for as they take their places in society and attempt to use logical persuasion to convince other reasonable people to think or act in a certain way. Students should be reminded that this type of argument is directed toward openminded people who will respond to logic rather than toward the kind of people who have prejudiced themselves against change for irrational or emotional reasons.

## II. Objectives

1) To develop an understanding of and to practice the process of argument
2) To establish rational criteria for choosing a leader
3) To demonstrate an understanding of the character traits of major characters in Julius Caesar from Roman history and Shakespeare's play
4) To practice basic writing skills: wording, flavor, usage, sentence and paragraph development, mechanics, and spelling

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Introduce the task of writing an argument in support of one of the Romans--Caesar, Antony, Brutus, Cassius, and Octavius--who have been reincarnated and who are the five candidates for President of the United States.
2) Lead students in a general discussion of character traits which they know these men to have as a result of their study of Shakespear's play, Plutarch's Lives, and any reference material they have used bearing

on their lives. In this brainstorming session insist that students qualify adjective description by proof.

3) Show students newspaper and magazine editorials and copies of effective argument from several sources. Demonstrate the need for stating the proposition, for anticipating objections to the propositions and reaching a decision about how to overcome them in writing, and for selecting strong evidence to be used both in support of the proposition and in overcoming the objections to it. Discuss the honest writer's need to avoid using name calling, insufficient evidence, slanted evidences, and emotionalism.
4) Allow one class period for students to formulate proposition and jot down in note or list form the evidence they will use to support it. Circulate in the class to help with this process.
5) Ask students to bring a readable rough draft to class the third day following #4.
6) Divide the class into groups of three to read one another's rough drafts and give editorial advice.
7) Act as resource person as the editorial process occurs.
8) Three days later when final drafts are submitted, divide the class into small groups for reading of papers. Have each student in the group write on a small sheet of paper the one thing he thought was most effective and one suggestion for improvement for each paper in the group. These comments should be handed to each author individually as each reader finishes. At the end of the period the class should discuss and perhaps list on the board the main strengths and weaknesses observed in the papers as a guide for future writing lessons.
9) Collect and evaluate final drafts.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Select a candidate to support by participating in class discussion and reviewing notes made on the characters.
2) Take notes and participate in discussion as teacher presents models and procedure for writing argument.
3) Present a one minute commentary in support of a candidate. Make notes on comments received in rebuttal. Make notes on commentaries and rebuttals which other students present.
4) Develop a thesis based on a proposition and list evidence that will support each point.
5) Write a rough draft of the paper and bring a readable copy to class for editorial session.
6) Participate in editorial review of papers in a group of three.
7) Consider classmates' and teacher's suggestions during revision of the paper.
8) Prepare a final draft to be read and critized for strengths and weaknesses by a larger group of classmates and to be evaluated by the teacher.
9) Participate in group criticism and in class discussion of strengths and weaknesses and make suggestion for further instruction and practice needed by class members.
10) Hand in paper to teacher for final evaluation.

V. Evaluation

The teacher should choose a method of evaluation which assesses the degree of success the student has achieved in the following areas:

1. developing an argument
2. establishing rational criteria for choosing a leader
3. using valid evidence
4. demonstrating ability to use the basic writing skills

Students should be allowed to revise the paper and resubmit it to the teacher after this evaluation if they want to. (*As often as a student is willing to work on a single piece of writing to improve it, you should be willing to re-evaluate.)

TOPIC: Writing Reviews

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# STUDENTS AS FILM CRITICS

## I. Rationale

Film study affords the teacher an excellent opportunity to assist in the development of a student's composing skills. It also serves as a somewhat disguised invitation for the student to return to the "printed word."

Since many students come to the classroom already "cineliterate," it becomes the responsibility of the teacher to explore with these students the possibilities for further growth in communication skills.

While the assignments which follow focus on film appreciation, they attempt to bring students back to the "printed word" and are designed to provide them with opportunities to improve their composing skills.

## II. Objectives

1) To extend appreciation of film by studying approaches to film criticism
2) To develop basic research skills
3) To apply film language to poetry and prose in order to sharpen ability to identify and appreciate the imagery found in two major divisions of literature
4) To write a critical review of a film using a specific approach
5) To engage in self expression and creativity

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Define and illustrate basic film terms; following an illustration of each, give a Glossary of Film Terms to each student.
2) Lead students in a discussion of favorite films and film sequences (e.g. the deaths of Bonnie and Clyde; the chase in The French Connection).
3) Give each student a short bibliography of important books and periodicals which provide film criticisms.
4) Assign report paper on "What Critics Say About My Favorite Film."
5) Provide students with handout on "Six Approaches to Film Study"; give examples of each type of criticism.
6) Ask students to include in report paper type(s) of film criticism used by critic.
7) Ask students to bring to class one of their favorite songs, a song with lyrics rich in visual imagery. If record is available, students should bring it to class. Write or type the lyrics neatly for class use.

8) Assist the student in making a short "shooting script" of his/her song using film terms (camera angle, type of shot, etc.).
9) Ask student to play record of song and then ask classmates to respond as to how they visualize the song.
10) Encourage the students to write an original prose poem or scenario.
11) Assign a novel (e.g. Shane) for reading (2 weeks); lead class in an appraisal of elements of fiction (plot, conflict, structure, theme, statement, etc.).
12) Show George Steven's film Shane; lead class in discussion of elements of film (structure: shots, scenes, sequence and montage, matchcutting, etc.).
13) Assign a criticism of the film that uses the CROSS-MEDIA approach; ask students how they might have used other approaches.
14) Discuss editing process for film; illustrate the process.
15) Discuss editing process for writing; illustrate the process.
16) Have students edit for "Publication" their Cross-Media criticism of Shane; small group work.

Note: Students can engage in many other composing activities: develop a storyboard, make a slide presentation or 8mm film. In addition, both feature-length and short films are viewed by the students and are discussed and/or analyzed.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Learn basic film terms and give examples/illustrations of each.
2) Participate in class discussion, projects, and small group sessions.
3) Research and prepare report papers on "What the Critics Say About My Favorite Film"; determine the type of film criticism used by each critic.
4) Study "Six Approaches to Film Study":
   a) The CROSS-MEDIA approach (book--film)
      1) Elements of fiction (plot, theme, tone, point of view, style, symbolism, irony, characterization, setting)
      2) Elements of film (shots, scenes, sequences, camera set-up, lighting,editing, sound, composition, acting)
   b) The FUNCTIONAL approach (merging of form and content--technical worth
   c) The THEMATIC approach (meaning inherent in film)
   d) The STYLISTIC approach (auteur)
   e) The GENRE approach (elements contributing to a type--western)
   f) The CRITICAL-AESTHETIC approach (judgment of artistic value).
5) Write a prose poem or sceanrio for translation into film terms.
6) Bring to class the lyrics of a favorite song and translate into film terms.
7) View and discuss critically selected films.
8) Read an assigned novel; see film adaptation of that novel.
9) Write a CROSS-MEDIA criticism of the two works.
10) Study editing process for both film and written composition.
11) Turn in a "publishable" film criticism.
12) Contribute to "free-choice' activities (slide presentation, collage, storyboard, etc.).

V. Evaluation

Grade is determined by attendance, quality of written work, participation in group activities, contributions to class discussions, and demonstrated knowledge of film and film technique.

TOPIC: Writing Letters

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Grades 9-12

# BUCKLE UP!

## I. Rationale

An interdisciplinary approach to driver's education was initiated in my school on the premise that all departments should stress automobile safety and travel planning. This activity lends itself to many skills other than driver's education,although none will be discussed other than the writing skills of business and friendly letters.

The student is told to select a vacation spot to which he will drive. Among the tasks to be accomplished in preparing for his trip will be maintaining the car, routing the driving, calculating the necessary finances, etc. The English skills will require that he/she write a business letter to the city's Chamber of Commerce for vacation advice and to a motel for room reservations and that a friendly letter be written to a relative to request a visit during the trip (none is to be mailed). An oral report may represent the student's accomplishments.

## II. Objectives

1) To practice writing business and friendly letters
2) To improve in the mechanics and structures involved in letter writing
3) To create a trip for enjoyment

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Provide a geographical aid for the student to use in selecting this vacation spot (Atlas, road map, wall map, etc.).
2) Provide models fo business and friendly letters from textbooks and/or teacher-made examples.
3) Instruct the student to complete the associated travel details (car maintenance, mapping routes, etc.) outside of class time.
4) Assist the student in writing the two business letters. The following criteria should be explained to the student:
   -To the Chamber of Commerce:
   a) Ask for information concerning the vacation city: historic sights, travel tours, motel accommodations, restaurants, etc.
   b) Request pamphlets, maps, etc., to assist in the planning of the vacation
   -To a local motel:
   a) State the dates of the vacation
   b) Request the type of accommodation needed (room, apartment, suite, etc.). State time of arrival.
   c) Inquire about extra motel services (pool, restaurant's prices, laundry, etc.)
   d) Ask for confirmation of reservations and necessary deposit.

5) Allow one week for this activity.
6) After rough drafts are completed, permit the students to seek assistance from classmates in revising the letters.
7) "Cut" business envelopes from plain paper; distribute for addressing (fictitious addresses acceptable).
8) Collect both letters and evelopes.
9) Discuss the differences (contents, structure, and usages) between business and friendly letters.
10) Assist the student in writing the friendly letter to his/her relative.
11) Permit peer interaction for letter's revision.
12) Provide a mock envelope for addressing.
13) Collect letters.

OPTIONAL:

14) If time permits, continue the activity with oral reports about all of the vacation preparations. If done, the student should read his/her three letters as part of the report.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Select a vacation spot.
2) Master the structural forms of business and friendly letters.
3) Complete additional tasks associated with the vacation.
4) Write the two business letters, requesting teacher assistance when needed.
5) Seek students' opinions concerning needed revisions of the letters.
6) Address envelopes and submit letters and envelopes to the teacher (Addresses may be fictitious).
7) Repeat the writing process for the friendly letter (steps D-F).

V. Evaluation

The letters will be evaluated according to the proper adherance to specified contents, correct structure, and correct usage. These will be dictate by the type of letter. Mechanics should be regarded as a valuable indicator of achievement in the successful writing of the business letters. Other considerations will include effective working in class and preparations for the oral report, if presented.

TOPIC: Writing an Argument

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Grades 8 and 10-11

# SINK OR WRITE

## I. Rationale

This exercise asks students to take a stand and defend it. The situation they are asked to explore involves six people in a sinking four-man lifeboat, which will float if two sacrifice themselves. The exercise requires the student to think and write logically and completely in order to convince the audience of his/her point of view. In order to involve each student closely in the dilemma, the exercise includes role playing and small group discussion. Junior high and senior high students on all levels should enjoy this assignment.

## II. Objectives

1) To explore many sides of a conflict
2) To learn to take a stand on an issue and to defend that stand unwaveringly
3) To learn to state a point of view clearly
4) To learn to present enough evidence or reasons to be convincing
5) To learn to maintain a consistent tone
6) To practice basic writing skills, such as punctuation, sentence structure, and spelling
7) To practice editing skills during rewriting

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Hand out to each student a copy of the following story:

   Six people are adrift in the middle of the ocean in a lifeboat which can hold only four survivors of a shipwreck. The six people are a ten-year old child, a priest, a criminal condemned to life imprisonment, a mother, a nurse, and an elderly man who has led a successful life. In order for four to survive, two must jump overboard and, of course, drown. Who do you think should jump? Why?
2) After the students have had time to read the story, allow 5-10 minutes for a fairly free class discussion. Make sure each character in the boat receives some attention.
3) Divide the class into groups of 5-6 pupils:
   a) Ask a group of six to spend about 15 minutes preparing to role play the situation. They should end their skit with two people jumping overboard.
   b) Ask the other groups to discuss the story and come up with a group decision in about 15 minutes. The decision should be unanimous. (Each group should choose a leader and spokesperson.)

4) Ask the role-playing group to present their skit.
5) Ask the spokespersons of the other groups to announce their groups' decisions. There should be no further discussion.
6) On the second day, lead students to recognize the elements of effective argumentation. (See objectives.) Use one or more models.
7) Have students write in class two or three paragraphs in which they state and defend their choices for the two sacrificial victims.
8) Circulate among the students to help when they ask or when you see a problem.
9) Collect the papers two days later.
10) Divide the students into groups of four to six (groups other than those of step 3) for the purpose of sharing each other's papers and making suggestions for improvement. Again, circulate among students to help, but only if asked.
11) Have students rewrite their own papers and turn them in about two days later.
12) Read and evaluate the final drafts.
13) Display the best papers on a bulletin board set aside for student work.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Read the story handed out by the teacher.
2) Discuss the questions at the end of the story with the entire class. Listen carefully to the opinions of others.
3) Participate in either a role-playing activity or a small group discussion of the story's questions.
4) Study the skills necessary for effective argumentation.
5) Determine your point of view and the reasons for it.
6) Write a two or three paragraph argument stating and supporting your point of view. Consult the teacher about problems.
7) Participate in small group reading and discussion of your paper and that of others.
8) Offer suggestions for the improvement of others' papers and consider those offered to you.
9) If necessary, consult the teacher.
10) Write the final draft and submit it to the teacher on the designated day.

V. Evaluation

The paper should receive two grades: one for the effectiveness of the argument (60%), and the other for accuracy in using basic writing skills (40%). Effort should be considered as part of the final grade of the marking period.

TOPIC: Writing Persuasively

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# THE MOTIVATED SEQUENCE

## I. Rationale

What could be a better reason for writing than the need to persuade someone to do something? The purpose of this lesson is to show students that there are five basic steps (called the Motivated Sequence) that can be applied to any form of persuasion, from ads to editorials to getting a raise in allowance.

Students will be asked to locate and bring in different kinds of examples before being asked to create some of their own.

## II. Objectives

1) To develop powers of critical thinking in distinguishing persuasive writing from other forms of writing
2) To understand the five steps of the Motivated Sequence that lead to a good piece of persuasive writing
3) To practice basic writing skills
4) To recognize the importance of clarity in persuasive writing
5) To use revision as a means to obtain clarity
6) To recognize subtlety as a virtue in persuasion

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Collect as many examples of ads as possible (at least a dozen).
2) Lead a discussion of how these things are similar to each other.
3) Identify with the students the following things that ads do (although not necessarily in this order):
   a) get your attention
   b) let you know that there is something you need
   c) tell what will satisfy that need
   d) give you a picture (or description) of how great it is to have that need satisfied
   e) get you to buy the product or idea that satisfies the need.

This is the Motivated Sequence.
(Note: b and c can be combined in a piece of writing or advertising, and e is often implied rather than stated.)

4) Have students make a list of as many other forms of persuasive writing as they can think of. As a class, discuss the lists. Do not leave out such occasionally persuasive forms as novels and poems, in addition to the more obvious editorials, commercials, letters to the editor, political cartoons, campaign speeches, etc. How are these similar?

5) Assign students one of these three tasks:
   a) finding and bringing in five ads, identifying with each the steps of the Motivated Sequence
   b) viewing five television commercials, identifying with each the steps of the Motivated Sequence
   c) finding and bringing in a total of five editorials, letters to the editor, and/or political cartoons, identifying with each the steps of the Motivated Sequence.
6) Discuss what the students have brought in.
7) Tell students to choose a product or an idea to "sell" to someone. The task is then to create:
   a) an ad
   b) a television or radio commercial
   AND
   c) either a speech, editorial, or letter to the editor.
   Each piece should use the steps of the Motivated Sequence. Illustrations and art work are definitely appropriate.
8) Remind students that their writing need not read like this to follow the Motivated Sequence: "Attention! You need a high mileage car. VW is a high mileage car. Just think about not having to pay as much for gas. Buy a VW."
9) When papers come in, have students work in small groups (no more than five) to exchange papers and identify the steps of the Motivated Sequence in student work. Where the steps are not clear, revision is called for.
10) Allow students to write a final draft. The final draft is to be accompanied by a statement in a Sealed Envelope which has the student's name on the outside, of what it is the student wants his reader to do, buy, believe, or ponder.
11) Collect papers.
12) (OPTIONAL) Videotape some of the class' favorite student commercials. Record the radio spots. Send the editorials and letters to the editor of your school or local newspaper.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Discuss with the class the ads your teacher has brought in.
2) Decide how these are similar to each other.
3) Write down the steps of the Motivated Sequence and decide how they apply to the ads.
4) Write down and then discuss other kinds of writing that are trying to get you to buy something, do something, believe something, or think about something (sometimes even novels and poems can do this).
5) On paper, identify the steps of the Motivated Sequence in either:
   a) Five newspaper and/or magazine ads that you can bring to class,
   b) Five television commercials that you have just seen,
   OR
   c) Five editorials, letters to the editor, and/or political cartoons that you can bring to class.

6) Discuss these in class.
7) Choose one product or idea that you want to "sell" to someone. Create:
   a) an ad,
   b) a television or radio commercial,
      AND
   c) either a speech, an editorial, a letter to the editor, or a political cartoon, convincing people to do what you want them to do. Use the Motivated Sequence.
8) Remember that sometimes the steps of the Motivated Sequence can be implied rather than stated. Not every ad ends with "Buy our product!"
9) In class, work with a small group of other students. Read each other's work, discuss how it follows the Motivated Sequence, make and take suggestions on how to make things clearer.
10) Write your final draft.
11) Write down on a piece of paper what it is you want your reader to do, buy, believe, or think about. Put this into an envelope. Seal the envelope, put your name on the outside, and attach it to your final draft.
12) Hand in your work on the day set by the teacher.

V. Evaluation

Students work should be evaluated on the basis of how well they accomplish their stated objective (which should not be read until after you have reacted to the work). All three pieces should have a single purpose.

TOPIC: Descriptive Writing

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# A FOCUS ON DETAIL

## I. Rationale

Most students, when asked to write descriptively, respond with generalities ("The lake was beautiful," "The clerk was ugly," "The mansion was luxurious"). They fail to understand the power that the professional writer finds in specifics.

Before making a descriptive writing assignment, a teacher might do well to find or write an example of a good descriptive paragraph; ditto it; and ditto, also, another version of the paragraph in which he/she uses only generalities. The teacher might also profit from Don Murray's A Writer Teaches Writing (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1968). Murray's book contains valuable advice and many helpful examples of effective specifics. There are also even suggested lesson plans for writing units.

What follows is a potpourri of suggestions for teaching the value of specifics. The teacher may want to use them all at once, or he/she may want to intersperse other activities between some of them. Regardless, the teacher is urged to send students out with pencil and paper to take notes on intriguing locations before writing descriptions of them.

## II. Objectives

1) To develop powers of observation
2) To develop an awareness of the communication power of specifics and to practice using them
3) To develop an awareness of the effectiveness of details that involve as many of the five senses as possible
4) To practice organizing specifics into an outline for a paper of more than one paragraph
5) To practice writing a paper from an outline
6) To practice basic writing skills (capitalization, sentence development, punctuation, spelling, paragraph development, diction)

## III. Procedure for the Teacher

1) Pick a time when there is a local event that students can enjoy describing (such as a state fair, a county fair, or a flea market).
2) Make a list of places that lend themselves to being described effectively (by students who cannot attend the event). Examples of such places are bus stations, train stations, and shopping malls.

3) Lead a discussion of the specific and the general. Be sure students understand the difference as well as they think they do.
4) Distribute dittoed copies of "Hope" by Sandburg from The People, Yes. Lead discussion of the effectiveness of details he has chosen to symbolize hope.
5) Ditto a list of abstractions for which students can furnish meaningful specific details (almost symbols). Some that work well are poverty, loneliness, success, class, security, frustration, happiness, embarrassment, and failure.
6) Give students a few examples for No. 5. ("Loneliness is watching TV alone on Friday night." "Happiness is eating cucumber sandwiches in a porch swing." "Class is walking over an open manhole cover and not falling in.")
7) Give students fifteen to twenty minutes to fill in specifics.
8) Collect students' lists.
9) Make a ditto sheet containing the best specifics. Have each student represented at least once. Distribute sheets to students to admire and keep.
10) Lead discussion of the power of specifics to communicate in all writing.
11) Read (or distribute on ditto sheets) samples of effective paragraphs which make good use of specific details. Don Murray has a beautiful one on page 43 of A Writer Teaches Writing.
12) Lead a discussion of the importance of mood in a paragraph.
13) Work with students to list appropriate specifics for their classroom (Swedish ivy on file cabinet, New Yorker magazines on conference table).
14) Lead students to discover the dominant impression (mood) given by specifics, discard those that can't fit the mood, organize the rest into groups that could function as paragraphs in an essay. Point out to students that professional writers take this same route; from specifics to finished product.
15) Lead students in a discussion of the power of specifics that appeal to a sense other than sight.
16) Give students the list of their choices for a descriptive paper.
17) Assign students to take paper and pencil to the event or place of their choice and jot down at least fifty specific details worth noting (toddler's cries over lost baloon, fat lady's handful of cookies, a child's hand's stickiness, a hot dog's aroma of onions). Urge students to have at least a few for each of the five senses. Suggest students divide paper into five columns, label each column with the name of a sense, and write senses in appropriate columns.
18) After students have specifics, direct each student to find the dominant mood implied by his/her specifics.
19) Circulate while students organize specifics into appropriate outlines and begin papers.
20) Announce that the next day will be a "work day" and that papers will be due the next day. (A capable class may be able to turn papers in the next day.)
21) Direct each student to submit his/her rough draft to two "editors" who will give written critiques on it. At least one editor should be another member of the class. The other editor can be another class member or he/she can be someone who attended the place/event with the student.

22) Suggest that each critique include two to five strengths about the paper and one to three weaknesses in content and one to three weaknesses in mechanics.
23) Serve as critic and adviser throughout the unit.
24) Have students submit revised papers and critiques on appropriate date.
25) Read and evaluate finished papers.
26) Display best papers on bulletin board. Suggest that students submit them to the literary magazine.

IV. Procedure for the Student

1) Participate in class discussion of specifics and of Sandburg's "Hope."
2) Write a meaningful specific for each abstract term furnished by the teacher.
3) Participate in composing a list of specifics for the classroom, finding the dominant mood implied by the specifics, organizing the specifics into groups, and outlining a paper that could be written from them.
4) Choose an event or place for descriptive paper.
5) Take paper and pen to location, and jot down fifty specifics divided into five columns labeled with the names of the five senses.
6) Discover dominant mood built by most of the specifics. Discard those that don't fit.
7) Organize specifics into appropriate groups and write an outline from them.
8) Write rough draft from outline.
9) Draw up critique sheets from suggestions given by teacher. Have appropriate spaces for strengths and weaknesses.
10) Seek teacher's help whenever needed during the unit.
11) Get two people to critique rough draft.
12) Serve as critic for another student. Point out strengths and weaknesses in content and mechanics.
13) Read critiques thoughtfully, and revise rough draft according to appropriate suggestions.
14) Hand in revision and critiques.

V. Evaluation

The teacher can give a grade for participation throughout unit if he/she wishes. The teahcer definitely should give two or three grades on the finished paper. Approrpiate grades might be on content, style, and mechanics. Grades should be put on papers and in grade book.

TOPIC: Writing Arguments
(Secondary Focuses - Writing for Variety of Audiences, Research Skills and Techniques

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Grades 10-12

# LETTERS TO ANN

## I. Rationale

Giving students an opportunity to disagree with one of Ann Landers' answers to a question from a young person on a common teenage concern is a useful writing assignment. Teenagers reflect a wide variety of moral values and feel strongly about such controversial issues as the Equal Rights Amendment, abortion laws, decriminalization and/or legalization of marijuana, etc. In making positive contributions to the solution of problems related to these issues, youth (all of us) must search for answers, think deeply, and write clearly. This assignment should therefore help students develop researching, thinking, and writing skills.

## II. Objectives

1) To analyze controversial subjects through careful research
2) To search for conclusive evidence to justify beliefs and to express them in a convincing manner
3) To organize evidence and correlate the relationships involved
4) To learn research skills and correct bibliographical form
5) To become aware of basic moral and political issues
6) To practice critical thinking
7) To learn the correct way to write a tactful, formal letter and address the envelope
8) To practice basic writing skills (capitalization, punctuation, spelling, paragraph development, sentence development, diction)
9) To appreciate the value of revision as necessary to polished writing

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Have students select an Ann Landers' answer with which they disagree (either in whole or in part) and one which has been directed to a teenage writer about a controversial subject.
2) Assign students the task of writing a convincing refutation in correct letter form.
3) Discuss the meaning of the word controversial and help students identify the most crucial current controversial issues.
4) By using textbook material, the chalkboard, transparencies, and models, show students the acceptable forms and styles to write a tactful, convincing letter.
5) Set a maximum of two hundred words for letter length.
6) Teach students proper bibliographical form and research skills.
7) Limit sources to periodicals and interviews.
8) Give two weeks for the total assignment--selecting the letter, researching for convincing evidence to refute answer, writing, revising, and completing their own letter.

9) Allow four days for students to prepare presentations for class where they read original question and answer, their letter of disagreement, and justification of their viewpoint (research evidence, reasoning, cause/effect relationships, etc.)
10) Ask class to evaluate each presentation and add teacher comments (suggestions on what to keep, what to delete, organizational strengths or weaknesses, sentence structure, etc.)
11) Use one class period two days before assignment due date for individual student-teacher conferences to concentrate mainly on correct letter format and mechanical errors. (Give free reading time or an assignment work period to those not engaged in conferences.)
12) Have students submit a bibliography of sources used for rebuttal material in letter.
13) Collect, read, and evaluate letters.
14) Return for overnight revision; collect again and mail.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Select an Ann Landers' letter with which you disagree (either in whole or in part) and one which has been directed to a teenager about a controversial subject.
2) Read letter carefully, analyze it, and decide on points of disagreement.
3) Study and master the form and style of a formal letter.
4) Study and learn proper bibliographical form and research skills.
5) Research for rebuttal evidence using periodicals and, if possible, a personal interview with someone who is an authority on the issue involved.
6) Make a bibliography of your rebuttal information.
7) Write your letter, limiting it to a maximum of two hundred words.
8) Participate in class evaluations of student letters and take advantage of student-teacher evaluations.
9) Arrange for extra pre-arranged time with teacher if needed.
10) Revise and complete in final form.
11) Submit the letter, addressed envelope, and bibliography of sources on assigned date.

V. Evaluation

A letter grade will be given for this assignment. Format, mechanics, preparation, class participation, clarity of thought, and argumentative substance will all be evaluated. Argumentative substance along with clarity of thought and expression will be weighted more heavily than other factors in grade given.

TOPIC: Writing a Research Paper

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Grades 9-12

# PERSONALIZING THE RESEARCH PAPER

## I. Rationale

Many teachers who question the requirement of a research paper have in mind the laboriously researched, studiously footnoted, third-person, term papers they were required to write in college. The research paper that I think retains value for the high school student is one that involves the student in the search for something of personal importance. My experience as advisor for Sea Chest, a Foxfire-project located on Hatteras Island, leads me to believe that the exploration of one's family and community is as valid a domain for research as books and magazines in the school library. For many students this exploration will motivate them not only to research books and magazines but to read them with real purpose. The popularity of the Foxfire Books and Roots supports my belief that family histories, local history, and local traditions and lore are bonafide research topics. Furthermore, they are within reach of students in urban and rural schools alike.

Another aspect of the Foxfire learning approach that may have considerable relevance in reconsidering the use of the research paper in the classroom is the idea that what is important is not the final product but the processes leading up to it. When a student hands you his finished paper, he is like Jason returning home with the Golden Fleece. By suggesting to your students topics like those I have mentioned, you start them out on a meaningful quest, yet with one significant difference. For Jason, the fleece was already in its final, perfect shape. If you want your students' work to be as "perfect," you are going to have to offer them guidance, evaluation, and support.

Finally, what I am suggesting here is not a magazine, not another Foxfire project, but a proven high-interest writing activity proportioned to meet research paper requirements and the teacher's available time.

## II. Objectives

1) To research and write a 5-10 page paper on your family history, on some aspect of local history, or on some local tradition or lore
2) To learn about your family or community history as relative to you and the world around you
3) To learn the basic research skills, such as interviewing, note taking, summarizing, paraphrasing, labeling, and ordering
4) To learn the basic format of the research paper, including bibliography and footnotes
5) To practice basic writing skills, such as capitalization, sentence development, puncutation, spelling, paragraph development, diction

6) To practice rewriting skills, such as editing, re-thinking, and revising

III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Introduce at the beginning of the term or semester the assignment.
2) Conduct a brain-storming session with your students in which you discuss the general topics of family history, local history, and local traditions. Ask them for the names of people, places, things that would be interesting to find out something about. Write these on the board. Suggest others. When the list is fairly complete, tell them to go home and think about one subject that they would like to explore. Tell them to ask around to see what they can find out about these things.
3) Hand out a list of the topics the next day to remind the students that they're to be thinking.
4) Ask how many students have decided on a topic and discuss these topics openly in class. This will get the undecided or lazy ones thinking.
5) Conduct the same sort of discussion on the last day for deciding. If any student has not decided by that date, suggest a topic to him/her. Keep the list of topics and names of students on the blackboard as the students make up their minds. (Procedures 1-5 will take a week and will be conducted during other class activities.)
6) Introduce the idea of sources as people, newspaper and magazine articles, books, journals and diaries, graveyards and family bibles, photographs and paintings, maps, drawings, blueprints, etc.
7) Keep the research personal by asking the students to discuss; then to write down what they know about a subject; then to talk to members of their families, parents, relatives, etc.
8) Explain note-taking to them, interviewing techniques (an interview is a conversation with someone about something), use of quotations.
9) Allow the students one to two weeks for interviewing, setting aside time periodically for individual conferences and class discussion.
10) Once the students have accumulated their primary material (a date or deadline should be set for this) and you have gone over it with the students, direct them to newspaper articles, books, and magazines.
11) Explain how to take notes from written sources (paraphrasing, quoting, labeling the source, bibliography, and footnotes). If the students ask how many, suggest three or four, or however many they need.
12) Allow the students one to two weeks for locating their sources, reading, and taking notes, setting aside time periodically for individual conferences and class discussion.
13) Once the students have accumulated their secondary material (a date or deadline should be set for this) and you have gone over it with the students, take some time to talk about organizing their notes and writing their papers from them. This should have taken as much as five weeks for a term paper. Writing and rewriting will occupy the next four weeks.

14) Set aside plenty of classroom time for writing. Circulate among the students to answer their questions and offer advice.
15) Assign students to groups of three for peer evaluation. Papers should be read aloud at least once to oneself or to the group. Direct the students to use some kind of editorial sheet for evaluating each other's work. Each student should read the others' work.
16) Take up the individual papers and any rough drafts and notes on the due date.

IV. PROCEDURE FOR STUDENTS

1) Select a particular topic from the categories suggested by the teacher. Discuss it with your friends and family. When you have decided what to write your paper on, report it to the teacher and write your name and the topic on the blackboard so that other students will not unwittingly duplicate it.
2) Write down everything you know about the subject you have chosen.
3) Ask your family and relatives about it and write this information down.
4) Decide on several people you could interview for information for your paper. Write down their names and discuss them in conference or in class with the teacher.
5) Talk to the contacts during the time period your teacher has allotted. If you take notes with pad and pencil, be sure to write out your notes fully when you get home, otherwise you will forget things. If you tape record the interview, jot down a brief outline to help guide you through your transcription.
6) Label your notes according to one of the systems suggested by your teacher so that they can be better organized later.
7) Discuss with your teacher how to go about locating secondary sources (books, magazines, newspaper, etc.) and let him/her know what material you have found so that he/she can help you find additional material if necessary.
8) Take notes and label them so that they can be organized later.
9) Organize your notes from the interviews and the reading and begin to write your paper. You will need an introduction (answering the questions, Who? Why? What? Where? When?) and a conclusion (relating what you learned or summing up).
10) Let the two other members of your group read your paper, making comments and suggestions on the editorial evaluation sheet you attach to your paper. Any corrections that the others in your group make should be numbered and written on the evaluation sheet, with a corresponding number or letter in the margin of your paper.
11) Correct any misspellings or mechanical errors pointed out by the others and make any revisions you feel are necessary.
12) Hand in your final paper along with all your notes and rough drafts.

V. Evaluation

The research paper should be graded according to the following formula: 50% overall quality; 25% effort; 25% mechanics. The rough drafts and notes are handed in to help the teacher assess the students' effort.

When the papers are ready to hand back, the teacher might want to suggest various post-writing activities to the students, such as preparing albums of family history, serializing the articles in the local newspaper, assembling the articles into a magazine, binding them for use in the school or local library.

TOPIC: Mini Research

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# A READINGS NOTEBOOK

## I. Rationale

The Readings Notebook is a valuable aid for both students and the teacher. It is usually a composition notebook in which the students record background information to aid in the understanding of a subject.

For the teacher of any survey course in literature, this notebook can provide a way to supplement classroom study while at the same time teaching and/or reinforcing basic research skills. The teacher may provide the student with a course outline or a list of research topics appropriate to the course of study.

The student is advised that the Readings Notebook is his/her own study aid and should "work." The notebook will be taken up periodically, and grades on class discussion and/or contributions, short papers, and tests will be influenced greatly by the quality of notebook entries. It will serve as a communication link between the teacher and the student. The student should clearly understand all of this.

## II. Objectives

1) To use the library effectively
2) To sharpen reading and research skills
3) To use a variety of resource materials
4) To understand connections among writing, reading and speaking skills

## III. Procedures for Teacher and Students

1) The notebook might contain sections for Historical Background and Author/Cricicism Material.
2) Entries in each section follow an agreed upon style and are written in ink.
3) Beneath the source entry the student is allowed to quote directly from that source, identifying each quotation with page number for later referral or footnoting.
4) The student is not to take notes or to paraphrase--direct quotes only. Taking notes and paraphrasing are taught as learning skills in other activities and are not a part of the Readings Notebook activity. Since the Notebook will eventually serve as a resource book, the author's words as he/she expressed them should remain in tact. Also, the teacher in rewarding the notebook's excellence will be better able to focus on reading and research skills.
5) The length of the quoted material is determined by its importance and value, but students are encouraged not to make them too long or too short.

6) The student is to change the bibliography entry only when he/she changes sources; thus, any number of quotes can appear under a single bibliographical entry.
7) A "tag" or "slug" is placed in the left-hand margin as a clue to the content of the quoted material. This makes for easy cross reference.
8) The student is encouraged to react to the quoted material; however, this must be done by bracketing and the student's comments must be clearly apart from the quoted material.
9) The teacher can write comments and make suggestions for further study on any page or beside a particularly important quotation. The hope is that a dialogue will be about ideas and research methods and will carry over into conferences with the student. The student who has completed excellent research on a topic of concern to the entire class will be asked to give an oral report or direct others to the right sources.
10) If the student follows the style and quotes directly from his/her sources, the student will not be penalized for mechanics, spelling, etc.

IV. Evaluation

1) Each week the student is given an opportunity to share research with the class.
2) One or two short papers based on the research of the student may be required.
3) Some tests might be based entirely on the contents of each student's Readings Notebook.
4) Teacher-student conferences will include a discussion and exchange based on the Readings Notebook.
5) The teacher may occasionally call for a bibliography of sources used during a specific time period; this provides the teacher with the opportunity to check the variety of sources being used and to guide the student to different sources.
6) If properly done, the student can use the Notebook and its contents years later.

TOPIC: Writing the Research Paper

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Grades 11-12

# RESEARCH FOR A REASON

## I. Rationale

Too often students "do research" for the sake of "doing a paper." A relevant topic helps them become more enthusiastic about and adept at research. A topic assigned to Swarthmore College applicants in 1976 furnishes a topic with which students can become involved.

> The year is 1876. You may expect to live for another thirty-five years. What person would you want to know well during that time? For what reasons?

The students may do library research or personal interviews. They may choose someone who shared their interest in music, art, science, or some other field; they may select someone who benefited mankind; or they may follow the pattern set by Roots and research one of their ancestors.

While researching and writing, they will have a chance to clarify values and goals. They can also practice using the library, taking notes, writing paraphrases and pieces, and writing footnotes and bibliography.

This assignment works well as the first written assignment of the year for juniors and seniors. It can serve somewhat as a diagnostic paper.

## II. Objectives

1) To decide what character traits one admires and wishes to cultivate in himself
2) To refine one's goals
3) To determine the traits one values in a friend
4) To practice using the library and/or interviewing
5) To practice using footnotes and a bibliography in an assignment other than a formal library paper
6) To practice organizing a relatively long paper
7) To practice basic writing skills (capitalization, sentence development, punctuation, spelling, paragraph development, diction)
8) To appreciate the value of revision in polished writing
9) To practice giving constructive criticism to peers

III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Give students the quotation from the Swarthmore College 1976 application blank:

> The year is 1876. You may expect to live thirty-five more years. What person would you want to know well during that time? For what reasons?

2) Lead students to an understanding of what the college hopes to learn from the essays.
3) Lead discussion in which students list sources of information that will help them determine the subjects of their essays. They may list teachers (history, art, music), books (text and library), grandparents, other authorities.
4) Lead a discussion on the influence other people have on our lives. (Possibly mention Tennyson's "Ulysses:" "I am a part of all that I have met."
5) Remind students of need to footnote and introduce all paraphrased and quoted material. ("As Jones declares. . ."; "According to Smith. . .")
6) Present students with proper form for footnotes and bibliography. (Use ditto sheet or chalkboard or textbook.)
7) Give students two weeks to research, read, outline, and compose paper.
8) Impress on students the importance of revision.
9) Ask students to turn in with their papers three critique sheets dealing with the rough draft. Critics should include at least one class member and at least one "authority" (musician for paper on musician, etc.)
10) Suggest form for critique sheet that includes places for one to three bits of praise (at least one), one to three suggestions for improvement of content, and one to three suggestions for improvement of mechanics.
11) Serve as critic and resource person.
12) Allow three class periods for researching and reading in the first week.
13) Allow two class periods for criticizing and revising in the second week (one near beginning and one near the end).
14) Circulate among students on all work days.
15) Read and evaluate finished papers.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Participate in class discussions on values, friends, and sources.
2) Select person about whom to write after limited research on the period from 1876-1911.
3) Research person by reading and/or interviewing.
4) Take notes on research (preferably on note cards with one point per card).
5) Paraphrase all material not copies as direct quotations.
6) Learn form for footnotes and bibliography (even though using them sparingly).

7) Organize notes into rough draft.
8) Select three people to read rough draft. Include at least one class member and at least one "authority in field."
9) Serve as critic if asked by classmate.
10) Revise paper after reading critiques thoughtfully.
11) Hand in on designated day critiques and revised paper.

V. Evaluation

Four grades will be given and recorded for this paper. One will be for content; one, for style; one, for mechanics; and one, for the special techniques involved in the paper (use of footnotes, use of bibliography, and application of suggestions in critiques).

TOPIC: Writing the Research Paper

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Grades 10-12

# RESEARCH BASED ON PLACE NAMES

## I. Rationale

To generate interest and resourcefulness by using a different kind of topic is the purpose of this assignment in which pupils discover the origin of place names. This can develop into a full-blown paper with all the note cards, bibliography, etc., without the papers being so lengthy and burdensome for the teacher. The students will be exposed to the entire process of researching and writing a formal paper. Also, by using place names within North Carolina, the students will add to their knowledge of its history and geography.

## II. Objectives

1) To learn (or review) the fundamental skills of research
2) To use acceptable standards in format and in mechanics
3) To become familiar with available resources
4) To learn more about North Carolina
5) To recognize and to master the format and style of a formal letter, if necessary
6) To appreciate the value of revision

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Have each student select a county of North Carolina. Each student will have a different county. Exclude the one in which the school is located. (An alternate topic might be the states of the United States.)
2) Using three or so of the official state maps, cut out the county the pupil selected and give to him/her to use as a guide for place names.
3) Explain that the object of the research is to find the origin of the name of the county and the county seat plus the origin of a specified number of other towns, rivers, bays, mountains, and/or other geographical features. For example, in Wake County, who was Mr. Wake? Who was Mr. Raleigh? What is an Apex? Is Neuse an Indian word? In writing the paper, each pupil should give enough information about each name to identify the person who lent his cognomen to a designated spot and other pertinent data to make the paper interesting. The teacher may specify the minimum number a student should include in addition to the name of the county itself and the county seat. (Some will want to exceed the minimum.)

4) Use one or more class periods reviewing or introducing research methods, following a definite procedure that the teacher prefers. Some textbooks give step-by-step guides. The amount of time necessary for this will depend on the class and their previous experience with research.
5) Use one or more class periods in the school library. Again, this will vary, depending on the available resources there.
6) Direct attention to other places for materials--public libraries; college libraries, if nearby; etc. (Of course, the public libraries have an exchange system whereby one may order books from the State Library, etc.)
7) At this point, letter writing can become a part of the assignment by having students write to Chambers of Commerce for brochures, etc.
8) Follow a schedule for progress reports. The following is an example of a possible schedule:
   a) First check on note cards----------Two weeks from time of assignment
   b) Check thesis statement and tentative outline----------Three weeks from time of assignment
   c) Second check on note cards----------Four weeks from time of assignment
   d) Check on first rough draft----------Five weeks from time of assignment
   e) Editorial session with peers----------Following the above (#d)
   f) Submit to teacher revised copy of paper with note cards, bibliography, and rough draft----------Six weeks from time of assignment
9) Schedule individual conferences with students after their papers have been read. Make suggestions for final revision.
10) Collect and evaluate polished copies.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Select topic for research (origin of place names within one county).
2) Take notes and follow the guide suggested by the teacher for research techniques.
3) Use all avialable resources.
4) Use the proper format for a business letter if writing for information.
5) Follow the schedule for periodic progress reports.
6) Engage in peer group advisory sessions.
7) Revise and hand in (in folder or large envelope) the rough draft, the corrected copy, the note cards, the bibliography cards, the bibliography, and the outline with the thesis sentence.
8) Confer with the teacher at a scheduled time and at any other time that help is needed.
9) Revise a second time.
10) Hand in polished copy at the designated time.

V. Evaluation

Evaluation will vary according to the teacher and the grading system used within the school. One suggestion for grading is to use S or S+ on the paper itself and then to use a test on research skills to arrive at a traditional grade. Such questions as the following could be used:

1) What is the purpose of footnotes?
2) Are quotation marks necessary for paraphrasing? Why or why not?
3) When is Ibid. used?
4) Arrange the following in correct bibliographical form: (Provide elements for four or five entries for a bibliography.)

Another way to grade a research paper is as follows:

50% on content, effort, perception
50% divided as teacher sees fit for his/her class on mechanics, thesis, outline, footnotes, bibliography, general format/neatness

TOPIC: Writing the Research Paper

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# YOU JUST AREN'T YOURSELF TODAY

## I. Rationale

Students often find researching famous people enjoyable and absorbing. After finishing a unit of literature dealing with people who have risen above the "common sway," invite the student to select one of the people studied and to research his/her life.

As a preface, this project was successfully done with my students in World Humanities, an advanced class. The project was a culminating activity at the close of the year; therefore, the list from which the students chose was extensive. My students chose from some of the following: Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, Abraham, Peter the Great, Catherine of Russia, Elizabeth I, Mary of Scots, Voltaire, Rousseau, Milton, Bach, Shakespeare, Archimedes, Pasteur, Newton, Gertrude Stein, DaVinci, and others. (In my activity many readings were from sources other than literature because of the content of the course.)

After the readings are completed and the selections have been done, the students are required to read a minimum of one book about the selected person (not necessarily a standard biography), to research the life and major contributions of the person, and to locate two anecdotes about the person to demonstrate human interest. The teacher assists in the researching and the writing of the findings.

There is no "formal" research paper required in the sense of a "term paper"; however, the student is expected to record his/her findings. Consequently, mechanics such as taking notes, constructing outlines, and recording footnotes and bibliographies must be reviewed or initially taught. Writing, though, is the secondary product of the activity; research is the primary one.

To cap off the activity, each of my students was expected "to become" the person who was researched. The student obtained a costume and wrote a creative monologue dealing with an overview of the person's life, a "You Were There" approach. The student presented a minimum of ten minutes' information, recounted in first person. Therefore, creativity also played an important part in this activity.

## II. Objectives

1) To discover the special qualities of a famous person through reading, researching, and writing
2) To strengthen research skills (writing mechanics, outlines, footnotes, bibliographies, etc.)

3) To apply research techniques and results to a written product
4) To engage in creative expression through the creation of a dramatic monologue
5) To correlate writings, technical and creative, with other methods of artistic expression, such as costuming and dramatic speaking

III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Compile a list of "special people" obtained from the readings done by students.
2) Assist the student in making the choice of whom to research.
3) Accompany the student to the library and assist in obtaining at least one non-fictive or biographical book on the subject.
4) Allow one week in class for reading the book.
5) Teach some practices of note-taking, emphasizing the necessity of organization.
6) Present models of research skills. Refer the student to examples in textbooks or handouts.
7) Stress the necessity of avoiding plagiarism.
8) Assist the student with additional research for one week.
9) Confer with students regarding mechanical problems. Assist in organizing notes.
10) Allow two weeks in class for the writing of a 500-1,500 word paper summarizing the student's findings. Assist the student in organizing the notes taken.
11) Permit the students to confer with you and fellow classmates for advice regarding revision of the rough draft(s).
12) After the final draft is completed, collect the papers.
13) Allow an additional week for creating a dramatic monologue to be presented to the class.
14) Confer with the student about the costume and rough draft of the monologue.
15) After consultation with the student, assist in the revisions.
16) Permit the student to present the monologue to the class (memorized/acted--not read).
17) Collect the written monologues.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Select a subject to be researched from the list supplied by the teacher.
2) Read at least one book on the subject.
3) Master the mechanics of taking notes, making an outline, and constructing footnotes and bibliographies.
4) Narrow the subject to one aspect suitable for a paper 500-1,500 words; continue research.
5) Confer with the teacher when necessary.
6) Write a rough draft(s) after note cards have been organized.
7) Consult with the teacher for aid in revising the rough draft(s).
8) Complete a final draft and submit to the teacher.

9) Work in class one week, composing the monologue to be presented to the class; secure the costume for the presentation.
10) Consult classmates for any help in revising the dramatic monologue.
11) Learn the monologue and present it to the class (minimum of ten minutes).
12) Submit the written monologue to the teacher.

V. Evaluation

There are many aspects to be considered for evaluation in this activity: using class time, planning class work, using good resources, researching the paper, mastering the mechanics of research writing, writing a quality paper, creating an interesting monologue, and presenting an effective oral account of the monologue. Since the majority of the time is spent working on the paper, the teacher may desire to grade on the research accomplished and on the quality of the paper written. Another grade would cover the creativity and presentation of the monologue, but it would reflect directly on the amount and quality of research done on the subject--three grades might possibly be earned.

TOPIC: Writing the Research Paper

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# PRE-WRITING GIVES FOCUS TO RESEARCH

## I. Rationale

Time is a precious commodity in the research process. Students sometimes flounder for days before deciding upon a subject and then discover that available sources are inadequate.

A statement of purpose for the research written before the note-taking process begins requires the student to decide more specific direction for the work that follows.

The teacher should have a wide range of topics and spend time reviewing research skills. After students compile a list of sources available for their selected subjects, they learn how to write a statement that ultimately develops into the thesis for the final draft. They practice a writing technique and establish priorities that save time.

## II. Objectives

1) To increase the productivity of time spent doing research
2) To narrow the subject and focus on available sources
3) To simplify questions regarding which facts should be recorded on note cards
4) To clarify the purpose for and direction of the research area
5) To have practice in developing a thesis statement
6) To share ideas and materials

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Begin discussing research possibilities whenever they come up.
2) Prepare a list of many research ideas and distribute it to the students.
3) Spend one class period discussing the list and allowing students to add suggestions.
4) Allot two nights for students to mull over the suggestions.
5) Review research skills one or more days, depending on class needs.
6) Have student hand in subject he/she is considering. Make comments on each card and return them the following day.
7) Take students to the library for two class periods to make a list of every source available that looks promising. Lists should have the title and author of the source, the library call number and page numbers, and, in case of periodicals, name, date, volume, and page number.

8) Instruct students not to take notes. They may browse through materials.
9) Check source lists in class the following day. Students who do not have the required number of sources must agree to use other facilities or change subjects.
10) Ask students to write a clear paragraph statement of the purpose, focus, and major sources for the research. The assignment should be due the next day.
11) Use a sample paragraph on the overhead projector or duplicate one to use as the assignment is discussed.
12) Set up small groups the next day to evaluate statements and to share knowledge of materials.
13) Circulate and act as adviser.
14) Assign a final draft of the statement for the following day.
15) Collect papers and add comments.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Consider research ideas presented in class and explore other possibilities.
2) Keep careful notes on the review of research skills and ask questions when uncertain.
3) Submit one or more ideas for research.
4) Use library days to locate as many sources as possible.
5) Keep a list of the sources.
6) Write a paragraph explaining the purpose of and possible direction for the research, listing major sources.
7) Participate in group evaluations and share knowledge of materials other students might use.
8) Revise the statement of purpose.
9) Consider statements made by the teacher on the final draft.

V. Evaluation

Give credit for completing the first major step in the research process. The student needs helpful direction more than evaluation at this stage.

TOPIC: Creative Writing

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Grades 10-12

# HOW TO INSPIRE RELUCTANT POETS

## I. Rationale

To trick reluctant poets into writing is the purpose of this assignment. First, pupils are given a choice of assignments. Also they are given a "frame" within which to work so that they will have a point of departure. This does not eliminate the chance to use figurative language and whatever other poetic devices they may choose. In one assignment especially, students can demonstrate their knowledge of abstract and concrete language. In addition, the task can be viewed as fun instead of work.

## II. Objectives

1) To review and practice using figurative language
2) To review the difference in abstract and concrete language
3) To express feelings and/or opinions in poetic form

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) If possible, lead into this assignment from a study of poetry in which figurative language has been discussed. Or recall for the students some poem that has easily recognizable imagery.
2) Ask the students to write a poem using one of the suggestions given (or more than one, if they are so inclined).
   a) Write the student's own telephone number vertically and use that as a guide for the number of syllables each line will have. A zero may mean a stanza division or perhaps the creative student may think of something more clever like "O!" The teacher may suggest topics for the most reluctant ones. The poem should include some figurative language.
   b) Choose something abstract such as an emotion and write five lines, one related to each of the five senses, to express that abstraction in concrete terms.

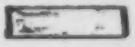
| | | |
|---|---|---|
| First line | _____ | a color |
| Second line | _____ | a sound |
| Third line | _____ | a smell |
| Fourth line | _____ | a taste |
| Fifth line | _____ | a touch |

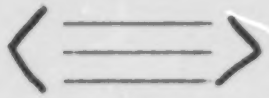
c) ABC Poem. Go through the alphabet having each line of poetry begin with the next letter of the alphabet. For a short incomplete example, note this:

All
Boys
Can
Devour
Edible
Food
Greedily
etc.

(The letter X is somewhat difficult. For it, they may use words like extra, spelled xtra.)

2) Allow one class period for a working session.
3) Have students bring in their work one or two days later.
4) Have them share their poetry with others.
5) Have editorial sessions with other members of the class to help improve work.
6) Have students polish poems and bring them in for evaluation. These poems are more effective if put on poster paper for display. Then the reader may see how the telephone number was used, or how the alphabet was used. The second suggestion is effectively illustrated with concrete objects or pictures of the same, as for example,

Fear is a dreary gray  (a block of gray color)

 Use something for each line.

It tastes like a mouthful of cotton. (Clue, a wad of cotton.)

## IV. Procedure for Students

1) Participate in class discussion when reviewing figurative language and abstract and concrete words.
2) Choose one of the options presented by the teacher to write one or more poems.
3) Bring the poem to class at the suggested time.
4) Participate in the peer-group advisory sessions.
5) Revise work.
6) For more effective display, arrange the poem on poster paper. It may be illustrated, also.
7) Submit the finished product to the teacher for evaluation.

## V. Evaluation

All students who complete this assignment should receive an S. Those who go beyond the required work and do two or more poems well should be given S+, which translates into an A, if it is necessary to compute grades numerically.

TOPIC: Creative Writing

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# CREATIVE WRITING "BLISS"

## I. Rationale

In fiction, "scenes of recognition" occur often enough to suggest the need for exposing students to several examples of them. The examples can, in turn, provide for creative writing assignments, thus combining reading-writing practice. "Bliss," by Katherine Mansfield, is the short story for use here. Additional examples for a lengthier study could include two of the short stories in Joyce's Dubliners ("Eveline"and "The Dead") and "Revelation" by Flannery O'Conner.

## II. Objectives

1) To understand what is meant by a "scene of recognition"
2) To experience the study of imagery, use of color, and symbolism in the short story "Bliss"
3) To see how Mansfield creates a total impression of bliss in the story
4) To realize the author's sense of timing to make the final scene one of immediacy and recognition
5) To achieve a high point of understanding and utilize the moment for writing

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Assign the reading of the short story "Bliss."
2) Use the following question for a short in-class writing assignment: What purpose does the pear tree serve to the meaning of the story?
3) Lead students through a class discussion that will cite imagery, use of color, the symbolism of the pear tree and how these contribute to the meaning of the story.
4) Invite students to find the one statement which serves as the clue to the "scene of recognition" ("Bertha Young had for the first time desired her husband").
5) Be sure the climax of the story is made clear. (The young wife, Bertha, sees her husband show his attraction to Miss Fulton and makes plans to meet her the next day.)
6) Call attention to the end of the story as Bertha Young asks, "What shall I do now?" The writer concludes with, "The pear tree was as lovely and as still as ever."
7) Make the writing assignment, offering three choices and asking students to choose one.

a) By writing a poem, capture Bertha Young's feelings as she has known this day of bliss, her first time to know passion.
b) Show in first person (poetry--perhaps an imitation of Masters' form in Spoon River Anthology) how Bertha Young reacts to the happening in the story as she recollects the day of bliss and the evening of revelation (her scene of recognition) as holding real significance to her life.
c) In a short prose writing, view the day and evening from Harry Young's (the husband's) point of view. One suggestion here is that this could be a confessional on his part, with the student determining whether he would confess to his friend, to a psychiatrist, or to Bertha herself. This could be written as a dialogue.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Read the short story "Bliss."
2) Come to an understanding of the literary devices being stressed by the teacher in "Bliss."
3) Choose one of the writing assignments.
4) Prepare the paper.
5) Edit and revise the paper.
6) Turn in paper to the teacher.

V. Evaluation

1) The grade given by the teacher will be determined by how well the student's writing shows understanding of the full meaning of the story and by how well he/she is able to go beyond the story through imagination to try another writing genre.
2) A second evaluation will be made by other students in the class who react to several of the papers to determine which hold greatest merit.

TOPIC: Creative Writing

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# WRITING ABOUT SURVIVAL

## I. Rationale

One of the most successful creative writing assignments I've tried is based on the theme of survival. I adapted for high school level a list of questions about survival on a desert island and a map originally drawn up for elementary pupils (see Jean Fischer, "Survival Means Staying Alive," Teacher (April 1977), pp. 73-74). Group activity using these verbal and visual stimuli will make writing possible even for the most reluctant writer.

There are ample literary and visual examples of this theme to refer to. Most of the students are familiar with such recent films as "The Poseidon Adventure" or "Survive" as well as the books on which these films are based. There are also short stories, such as Jack London's "To Build a Fire," which examine the qualities that enable or hinder heroes in their quests for survival. Variations of the same assignment may be used to explore modern problems of survival, such as over-pupulation and hunger, pollution and nuclear holocaust. The subject demands that students draw on all their inventiveness to help the hero out of the dilemma or to let the hero perish.

Though designed as a first-person narration, the student could easily write the story in the third person. This writing activity will take from seven to ten days to complete.

## II. Objectives

1) To use the imagination for addressing either real or imaginary problems of survival
2) To learn how to organize and sequence narrative details
3) To practice basic writing and rewriting skills (editing, proofreading, revising)
4) To explore the possibilities of creative literary expression and the various forms it may take

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Introduce the theme of survival to students through discussion of movies and books which they have seen or read.
2) Hand out a map of a desert island or similar hopeless setting, with a few pitfalls and a few items that may prove helpful, along with a list of questions for the students to answer. (Example: How did you provide for shelter? What did you eat? What did you do for clothes?) Let the students work in groups of three to produce their answers. Then let each group read aloud its responses while the others listen.

3) Read aloud selections from the literature of survival. Many will like listening to the description of Robinson Crusoe's shipwreck. Reading both the narration and segments of the daily journal provides examples of two modes of written expression.
4) Additional readings may be introduced to the class.. This is a good moment to bring in some of the literature for them to read and discuss in class. I've used such short stories as "To Build a Fire," "Antaeus," and "A Mild Attack of Locusts." Since I wanted my students to develop full-blown characters, I asked them to identify the qualities the heroes of these stories needed to survive.
5) Make the writing assignment, giving the students a choice of using the questions and map for their story or developing their own story without the use of these aids.
6) Circulate among the students, making yourself available for questions of spelling or grammar.
7) Provide time for student evaluation and commentary so that the work is read aloud by the author or another student at least once and edited by two other students.
8) Write your own story of survival to share with your students when they have completed theirs.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Discuss films and books you've seen and read with the teacher and rest of the class.
2) Work with two other students in answering the questions about survival on a desert island.
3) Listen to and discuss the teacher's reading selection from the literature of survival.
4) Read and discuss the short stories the teacher assigns.
5) Compose your own story of survival, either using the questions and map you worked on with the group, or drawing your own map and answering your own set of questions, or perhaps coming up with your own story and own unique survival situation.
6) Have two other students read and comment on your work, using the editorial evaluation sheets for their comments and suggestions. (The evaluation sheets leave the original manuscript unmarked and allow the student to think before making corrections. Mistakes, suggestions, reactions may be coded by numbers or letters on the manuscript. These would correspond to the numbers or letters on the evaluation sheets.)
7) Read aloud your writing after you have finished and make any additional corrections.
8) Hand in your finished work, the evaluation sheets, rough drafts, and notes.

V. Evaluation

The work should be graded on the basis of its organization (Does it have a beginning, middle, and end?), its development (Is there a coherent sequence of events?), and its use of details. The quality of the writing should be assessed and counted as two grades; the effort should be assessed and counted as one grade. The student may be directed to do prescriptive work on two or three major mechanical errors. The rough drafts and notes help the teacher assess the students' efforts.

(A very good sourcebook for creative fiction in the classroom is Karen M. Hubert's Teaching and Writing Popular Fiction, available from Teachers & Writers Collaborative, 186 West 4th St., New York, NY 10014.)

TOPIC: Creative Writing

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Grades 10-11

# THE UNEXPECTED AS A WRITING STIMULUS

## I. Rationale

In order to produce student interest in writing, experiences must be designed that arouse their curiosity and desire to communicate their own feelings and experiences. In this 7-8 day lesson, the stunning ending of Robinson's poem "Richard Cory" will be a motivating source of writing reinforced by Simon and Garfunkel's song "Richard Cory," a modernized version of the poem. After class discussion of the poem and song, the teacher will provide the students with a chance to related unexpected elements in their own lives or those of others through discussion and composition.

## II. Objectives

1) To recognize that wealth does not imply happiness
2) To compare and contrast the poem and song
3) To understand that characters in literature face the same problems we do that can never be outdated
4) To understand that surprise may or may not be avoidable
5) To learn ways to avoid disaster if possible or to deal with disaster when it strikes
6) To practice note taking skills
7) To practice basic writing skills (syntax, sentence and paragraph development, punctuation, diction, spelling)
8) To see revision as necessary to produce good writing
9) To practice editorial skills

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Prepare and distribute a handout of the poem and the song found on Simon and Garfunkel's album "Sounds of Silence."
2) Obtain a copy of this album for class.
3) Read the poem and lead the class to an understanding of its meaning. Ask them to discuss how ordinary people felt about Richard Cory and why he may have committed suicide.
4) Play the record. Allow students to sing or beat out the rhythm.
5) Lead discussion on which version they enjoyed best and why, and ask them to discuss how the song places the aristocratic Cory into a more modern setting.
6) Ask students to jot down several unexpected experiences in their own lives or those of others.
7) Divide the class into groups of five. Ask them to relate one experience to the group and its effects on them. Encourage comments by other group members on what is said.

8) After 2-3 days of prewriting, assign a paper with a one page minimum on one of the following:
   a) Pretend you are Richard Cory's psychiatrist. In a session he mentions suicide. Write what your advice would be to save him from imminent death and restore his happiness. Use a play or short story form if desired. Role playing this in class may provide an additional stimulus
   b) Write a story on the experience you related to the group and the lesson you learned from it, if any
   c) Considering what you feel to be the necessary ingredients for a happy life, write about what you think may be lacking in your own life and how you might fill this void.
9) After 2 days of composition, divide the class into groups of 3. Have both students read the other's rough draft and list on a separate sheet of paper at least 2 strengths and 2 weaknesses they find.
10) Allow one day for revision in class and circulate among students to answer any questions.
11) Collect the papers and evaluate strengths and weaknesses on a separate sheet. Read some of the best to the class.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Read the poem and take any notes that clarify the meaning.
2) Discuss why you think Richard Cory killed himself.
3) Listen to or sing the song and discuss the modern activities he is engaged in.
4) Jot down several unexpected experiences you have had or witnessed.
5) Discuss in groups one experience and your reactions to it. Respond to what each group member relates to you.
6) Select one of the three choices given for composition and compose a rough draft.
7) In a group of 3 students, read the other students' rough drafts and list on a separate sheet at least 2 strengths of their papers and at least 2 ways it could be strengthened.
8) Collect the other students' comments and use them to revise your paper. Hand in on the assigned day the final and rough drafts, the other students' suggestions, and any other work you may have done.

V. Evaluation

One grade will be given, based on the following percentages:
1) Quality (ideas, organization, style, sentence structure) - 50% of the grade
2) Mechanics - 25% of the grade
3) Effort observed in class participation and time spent wisely - 25% of the grade

TOPIC: Creative Writing

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# BLAST OFF!

## I. Rationale

Book reports can be the most boring assignment a student and teacher suffer through. Writing poetry can also be drudgery to a student and teacher. This activity is a method to incorporate writing the book report in the form of a poem and hopefully overcome the book reporting malaise.

(As a preface to this activity, it should be explained that my World Humanities students, advanced ones, read the epic Beowulf, The Canterbury Tales, and Shakespearean sonnets. Unbelievable as it may seem, the students were excited about the epic, fascinated by the pilgrimage, and delighted with iambic pentameter.)

The book reports involve the main character of the book in a pilgrimage to the moon. Though not an epic hero, each character is to demonstrate at least one characteristic of the epic hero. The student may write about any aspect of the character: his/her life, his/her relationships, conflicts, resolutions, accomplishments, etc.

The structure of the one-page poem has only one requirement: iambic pentameter as the meter. The heroic couplet, blank verse, or sonnet form (any of the three major forms) can serve as a rhyme structure.

Each poem is read aloud upon completion. The class then engages in a discussion of the newly-created pilgrims to the moon. The literary selections which serve as the bases for the activity are reinforced.

## II. Objectives

1) To practice creative writing, namely, a poem
2) To learn the iambic meter
3) To draw correlations among literary selections read and product written
4) To enjoy a sense of accomplishment from succeeding in a writing activity

III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Review the dominant characteristics of the literary selections which will serve as the bases for the creative book report.
2) Permit the students a class period to outline the story approach in which the main character is found. (Is the character happy; is the character's life tragic; is there a great moral lesson, etc.)
3) Announce a one-week time period for creating the poem (the pilgrimage).
4) Make available to the students, through textbooks, hand-outs, etc., additional explanations and examples of the characteristics of the epic hero and the iambic meter.
5) Confer with the students as the poem is created.
6) Allow two additional days for student interaction for comments and suggestions for revising the poem.
7) Encourage each student to read his/her product aloud, explaining the rhyme structure used.
8) Select several book report/poems for publication in the school newspaper; display others throughout the room.
9) Discuss with the class the comparison between the pilgrims in The Canterbury Tales and the pilgrims from the writings.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Review class notes on the literary selections read.
2) Decide the important characteristics of the main character in the book.
3) If necessary, review additional sources to gain insight on the epic hero and iambic meter.
4) Write the book report/poem in class, seeking assistance from the teacher when necessary and being consistent in the rhyme structure selected.
5) Consult classmates for suggestions to revise poem after rough draft is completed.
6) Revise writing.
7) Read the creative writing aloud, explaining the rhyme structure used.
8) Submit the poem to the teacher.
9) Join class discussion comparing the pilgrims going to Canterbury and to the moon.

V. Evaluation

The book report will be graded on creativity of thought and consistency of meter and rhyme. However, the teacher may wish only to award credit for completing the assignment if the student has been unsuccessful because of the new skills (rhyme, meter) involved. My students, though, were very successful in their efforts to produce this poem.

TOPIC: Creative Writing

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Grades 10-12

# CREATE A BOOK REVIEW

## I. Rationale

Book reviews can be a creative writing experience for the student and a creative learning experience for the teacher instead of sterile critiques that frighten students and bore teachers.

Creative reviews allow the reader to share his/her feelings in a relaxed and very personal way when they are done in a variety of forms over a period of two or three weeks. Not many students become critics or formal reviewers, but if they continue to read--which is certainly a desirable goal--they continue to share their reactions.

A number of choices given to students when they begin to read a novel, novella, play, or biography will allow them to have an exercise in creative writing and afford opportunities for thinking and understanding on more than one level. One caution: Use this method on a limited basis, perhaps one time per year.

## II. Objectives

1) To avoid the term "creative
2) To use creative writing as a means of reporting or reviewing
3) To share feelings and facts without fear of misinterpreting the author's meaning
4) To see an author's skill in writing sentences that carry keys to the theme
5) To write without pressure of a short deadline
6) To experience deeper appreciation for reading
7) To write every day
8) To practice editing and revision skills

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Assign the reading of a novel, novella, play or biography.
2) Tell students they will not write the usual report or review or give an oral report.
3) Assign a written reaction to the book. Allow two-three weeks.
4) Offer the following suggestions and invite students to add to the list:
   a) Keep a journal as you read. Record each date from the time you begin until you finish the book. Be honest. If you did not read one day, say so. Make frank comments when you are bored, confused, or delighted. You may quote sentences you liked or ones that caused you to think. Mention other books, stories, poems, or plays you are reminded of. Share challenges, joys or moral dilemmas you

have in common with a character. What insights did you gain into yourself and others? (These are suggestions, not required reactions.)

b) Keep a journal for a character in the book. It may be limited to one portion of his experiences
c) Write a poem with a theme found in the book. Briefly explain the background, using prose
d) Write one or more personal letters from one character to another and write a reply if you wish
e) Write a love poem (or another type) from one character to another. You may use free verse, sonnet, haiku, etc.
f) Write lyrics and/or music for a song that grows out of the reading.

5) Encourage students to try more than one writing suggestion if they have time.
6) Remind students of the assignment during the 2-3 weeks by brief discussions of what they are reading.
7) Allow several short time periods for consultation with teacher and peers.
8) Use the class period for sharing on the day final papers come in.
9) Display all papers on a bulletin board. Honor requests to keep journals private.
10) Evaluate and return papers immediately.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Read a novel, novella, play, or biography.
2) Be aware of key ideas and sentences.
3) Select one or more writing suggestions.
4) Identify with experiences and emotions of characters.
5) Read without fear of invalid comments.
6) Seek editorial advice from classmates and teacher while preparing a rough draft.
7) Discuss the book with peers and/or the teacher as you read.
8) Prepare a final copy with careful attention to editing and revision, especially of poems, letters, and songs.

V. Evaluation

Since it is virtually impossible to grade what a student experiences when reading a book, do not use a letter grade for his/her reading or writing. Instead write comments on another sheet of paper.

Tell students they will receive credit. Call attention to few mechanical errors and be generous with praise and personal comments. Let student comments during the sharing day serve as another evaluation standard for the writer.

TOPIC: Creative Writing

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Grades 10-12

# COMPOSING THROUGH READERS' THEATRE

## I. Rationale

High school students need to develop language concepts, images, and symbols adequate to give significance to their experience. Through written composition and creative drama a student can often objectify his/her experience and find what Robert Frost calls "momentary stays against the confusion of the world."

Readers' Theatre is an exciting art form and it is readily adaptable to the classroom. Teachers can adapt the use of such a technique to their needs and situation. Readers' Theatre recognizes that literature is action-oriented and that the function of the oral interpretor is to discover and share this action. The purpose of the following project in composition is to find a union among these components: the literature, the reader, and the listener. Its greatest value is that it develops creativity in students and is an outlet for creative talent.

The task given the students is to develop a Readers' Theatre production from their own poetry and prose and to perform that script before an audience.

### Description of Sample Project

Adolescence. What does the word mean? Theodore Roethke calls it "an ill-defined dying"; Samuel Butler, "an over-praised season." Regardless of its meaning, adolescence is a time of confusion--a time filled with triumph and disaster, fulfillment and frustration, pleasure and pain, joy and grief, hope and disappointment, perception and bewilderment. "Time in a Bottle" was an attempt to reflect how a group of students, as adolescents, felt about the world and themselves. The students were enrolled in a 9-weeks course in modern poetry.

The title of the production comes from a song by the late Jim Croce. This song served as a unifying element for the production, especially the line "But there never seems to be enough time to do the things you want to once you find them." The students worked individually and in groups. Contributions to the script came from the students' own poetry and prose.

Each student was evaluated by the number and quality of his/her contributions. The teacher also took into consideration the time spent in rehearsals and in the composing and editing processes.

A variety of methods was used to create suitable material--improvisations, brainstorming sessions, theatre games, assigned topics, and others. Once the class felt sufficient material had been developed, then the editing and arranging of the selections into a working whole began. Decisions were made as to the suitability of material. Compromises were made; initiatives were taken.

Once the rough draft was developed, copies were made and distributed to the class. The class as a unit evaluated the script and decided on speakers. From this point until the performance before an audience, what took place was a daily shifting of material for emphasis--editing, adding and deleting for total effectiveness.

The final production revealed the attitudes and feelings of a group of "adolescents." Perhaps a song written by one of the students best expresses the idea: "Who am I? Who am I?
When did you look to see
What is really me?
Who am I? Who am I?
I'm ME."

II. Objectives

1) To engage in self expression; to discover and share
2) To objectify experience through composition and drama
3) To see the union among these components: the literature, the reader-writer, the listener
4) To enrich literary fare while studying significant modern poets
5) To develop interpretive skills and to write for a purpose with a definite audience in mind
6) To develop creativity
7) To enhance perception through the use of lighting, figurative language, rhythm and sound values

III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Provide "saturation" sessions--using a variety of methods--to establish "flow" of student ideas:
   a) The Ungame: Students play a card game of questions. (Kimm Company, Los Angeles)
      1) What is your greatest fear?
      2) When was the last time you cried?
      3) What "turns you on?"
      4) If you could live in another time period, what period would it be? Why?
      5) If you could change anything about this school, what would it be? Why?
   b) A Slide Presentation (Moods and Feelings): Ask students to give titles to each slide and explain or react to each slide.
   c) A Question-Answer Session: Have students write a question to the class. Do not allow students to identify their question.
   d) Favorite Records: Have students play their favorite records by popular musical groups, etc. (e.g. Jim Croce)

e) Oral interpretation of literature: Read aloud poems and favorite passages of prose.

2) Invite students to bring to class a poem, a song, a paragraph, a picture, or a favorite quotation.
3) Provide a "contribution" box somewhere in classroom where students can deposit ideas.
4) Explain Readers' Theatre to class and provide a sample selection so that students will be able to see the type selection suitable for this kind of production (e.g. Materials of Millay, Wolfe, and Frost are exceptionally popular).
5) Begin improvisations using situations common to members in the class; gets student suggestions. Tape Record.
6) Assign one of the following compositions:
   a) "An Ineffable Experience"
   b) "Reliving a Past Experience"
   c) an original poem
   d) an internal monologue
   e) a short dialogue
   f) "If I Could Step Outside Myself"
   g) "A Change of Mind"
   h) I Loaf and Invite My Soul" (Whitman)
   i) a catalogue poem (e.g. Rupert Brooke's "These Have I Loved. . ."
7) Provide opportunities for "buzz sessions" and/or small group discussions built around ideas expressed in class discussions and/or written compositions.
8) Select a committee to develop the rough draft.
9) Goes over the sequence for adaptation to Readers' Theatre:
   a) Selecting
   b) Cutting
   c) Transferring and editing
   d) Staging.
10) Encourage committee to find the best compositions and the best parts of each composition--even if it's only one line.
11) Take inventory of talents found in the class (Dance, play musical instrument, sing).
12) Allow the students charged with developing the rough draft to cut and tape together a suggested order for presentation; type on ditto-masters for copies to be distributed to class for critical evaluation; suggest breakdown for speakers.
13) Select speakers and assign production committees.
14) Rehearse production; assist students in editing, deleting, and transposing for overall effectiveness.
15) Set up performance date.
16) Provide each student with his/her own copy of script.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Participate in class and small group discussions, brainstorming and question-answer sessions.
2) Study Readers' Theatre both as an art form and as a technique for oral presentation of literature.

a) What is Readers' Theatre?
b) Types of literature for Readers' Theatre?
c) Adaptation of literature for Readers' Theatre
d) Mounting Readers' Theatre
    1) Lighting
    2) Movement
    3) Setting
    4) Costuming
e) Evaluation

3) Choose writing assignments that provide best opportunities for contributing to production.
4) Participate in all phases of production from its genesis to its presentation before an audience--writing and collecting materials, cutting and adapting, and casting.

V. Evaluation

1) The production:
    a) A spectator must be more aware of what he/she has heard then seen.
    b) A Readers' Theatre production should offer an author's work more than can be obtained from silet reading or a solo interpretation.
    c) Presentation techniques should compiement the quality and nature of the literature presented.
2) The student:
    a) The number and quality of contributions are considered.
    b) The time and effort spent in rehearsals and in the composing and editing processes are significant.

TOPIC: Creative Writing

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Grades 10-12

# MEMORABLE MOMENTS

## I. Rationale

Biblical narrative, which includes none of the inner thoughts of the characters, inspired Reynolds Price to write a group of poems in which he speaks the feelings of some Biblical figures at crucial moments: Mary Magdalene as she discovers the empty tomb, Jairus' daughter as she is brought back to life, and the angel as he announces to Mary that she is to be the mother of Jews. Students can be motivated to imagine and express the underlying feelings of literary characters. This experience will help them understand and express their own emotions in writing that carries the emotion of a moment to a reader rather than the kind of dull writing that kills the drama of the moment because it is only about the emotion. In this lesson students are led to an assignment in which they relive a momentous personal experience and make it live for the reader by producing a diary, monologue or stream-of-consciousness narrative.

## II. Objectives

1) To gain insight into the feelings of others
2) To understand and express real feelings exactly as they are felt
3) To use language that is alive and vivid
4) To have peers respond to one's genuine feelings

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Lead a class discussion on some crucial event in a story or play the class has read in which a character such as Peyton Farguhas in Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge is involved in action; and the thoughts, feelings, and emotions which he experiences are spelled out for the reader. Then discuss a character like Tessie in The Lottery, whose inner feelings are not revealed to the reader. Have the students orally supply the inner words the character might be saying to himself as the action develops, telling why they think the character would feel these things. Or have students role play the situation with Tessie saying what she really feels.
2) Read examples to the class such as Reynolds Price's poem about Jairus' daughter or Peter Taylor's narrative, "The Hand of Emmagene" to show effective expression of inner feelings.

3) Divide students into groups of five or six and allow them to choose a character from another story they have all read. Have them write as a group a diary, dramatic monologue, or stream-of-consciousness narrative from the viewpoint of the character and then read their piece to the class for comment and criticism.
4) Ask students to relive a critical moment in their own lives and write a diary, narrative, or poem expressing the sensations they felt as the experience was occurring.
5) Serve as a consultant for students as they write and make suggestions which will help them keep their writing vivid and alive--for example, "Hot tears sting my eyes" rather than "I feel sad."
6) Divide students into groups of three to read one another's rough drafts and offer critical assistance.
7) Read a revised draft of the writing in brief conference with the student and make final revision suggestions.
8) Evaluate the final drafts and display them so that class members may read them. Provide a sheet on which the class may nominate the pieces of writing they feel are most successful for publication in the school magazine or newspaper.
9) Submit the nominated pieces for publication.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Participate in class discussion or role-playing to discover what certain characters in stories you have read must have been feeling as they were experiencing the things that happened to them.
2) Listen to the teacher's reading of examples of writing which describes feelings as they are occurring.
3) With a group of other students decide on a form and write a monologue, diary, or stream-of-consciousness narrative of the thoughts and feelings of a character in a story all have read.
4) Select someone to read the group's piece of writing to the class for comment and criticism.
5) Listen carefully to determine what kind of detail makes the pieces you hear vivid and alive.
6) Choose a critical personal experience (good or bad, but not too personal to share) and relive it. While re-experiencing each sensation or thought, record it in the form of an inner monologue, diary or stream-of-consciousness narrative. Stick to present tense. Make the moments vivid by recording real sensations rather than by describing with adjectives ("Hot tears sting my eyes," not "I feel sad.")
7) Submit a readable rough draft to two other students for suggestions and consult the teacher for advice on writing problems.
8) Discuss a revised draft with the teacher for final revision suggestions.
9) Submit a final draft to be read by other students and for possible publication in the school newspaper or magazine.
10) Read the pieces written by classmates and nominate the one you think is most effective for publication.

V. Evaluation

The teacher should evaluate for evidence of effort shown by the student in the entire process and for the effectiveness of the final product. Student nominations of pieces for publication could serve as a guide for determining outstanding achievement of success for a peer audience.

TOPIC: Creative Writing

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# USING VIOLENCE PRODUCTIVELY!

## I. Rationale

Most junior high and high school students enjoy cars and violence, two instant stimuli for imaginative thinking. Therefore, this exercise, which asks students to write a short story or poem about an automobile wreck from the point of view of an uninvolved observer, should appeal to them. It encourages students to develop their creative thinking by giving them a model to analyze, a familiar subject to explore, and opportunities to expand their thoughts and to express themselves in original ways. This exercise also allows them to expand their thinking by reading and evaluating the works of fellow students.

## II. Objectives

1) To explore the reactions of the observers of a serious car wreck
2) To learn to observe details through the use of the senses
3) To learn to see the relationship among details and their place in an entire picture
4) To practice writing using enough sensory details to form a complete image
5) To practice basic writing skills, such as sentence structure, punctuation, and spelling
6) To practice editing skills through rewriting

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Before beginning the unit, collect from students pictures of car wrecks. Encourage students to find pictures that include observers of the wrecks. Display these pictures.
2) After the pictures have been on display for two or three days, ask students to read in class Karl Shapiro's "Auto Wreck," found in Shapiro, Poems, 1940-53. Have them read the poem silently first. Then either you or a good reader should read it aloud.
3) Lead students in a discussion of Shapiro's questions and comments at the end of the third stanza. Then ask students to point out words and phrases they find particularly effective. Make sure they see the sensory details Shapiro uses to create both the overall image of the wreck and the reactions of the observers.
4) Review informally such things as diction, figurative language, imagery, and rhythm as the students discuss the poem.

5) Allow students to talk about any accidents they have seen in person or on television and in the movies.
6) Announce that during the next class period the students will be expected to write either a poem or a descriptive paragraph about a car wreck. They should think about this assignment overnight.
7) On the next day have the students write. Recommend (or require) that they brainstorm first, making a list of descriptive details and then throwing out unworkable ones.
8) Circulate among the students to provide assistance.
9) Collect the papers two or three days later and return them to the students for rewriting.
10) Divide the class into small groups of 4-5, and have the members of each group read one another's papers. They should comment on strengths and make suggestions for improvement. Allow the class one period for this activity.
11) On the next day, allow the students time for considering the suggestions of their fellow students and for beginning to rewrite their final drafts. Again be available for helping students to solve problems.
12) Two or three days later collect the papers for final evaluation.
13) Display the best papers on the bulletin board along with a copy of Shapiro's "Auto Wreck."

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Bring pictures of auto wrecks to class.
2) Read and discuss with the class Karl Shapiro's "Auto Wreck." Note particularly effective details.
3) Participate in a general discussion of wrecks and your feelings as a real or imaginary observer.
4) Think about and write a poem or paragraph in which you describe vividly an auto wreck. Include many sensory details. Ask the teacher for help if you need it.
5) Participate in the reading of other students' papers. Comment on strengths and make suggestions for improvement.
6) Consider the suggestions made to you and rewrite your final draft.
7) Hand the paper in for evaluation.

V. Evaluation

The paper should receive two grades: one for the effectiveness and completeness of the description, and the second for mechanics (basic writing skills and form). Because the focus of the assignment is creativity, the first grade should be given more weight than the second. In fact, the first grade should be 75% of the total. Effort should be considered when evaluating the student at the end of the marking period.

TOPIC: Writing for Varieties of Audiences

Estelle Mott
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Grades 9-12

# YOUTH AND AGE

## I. Rationale

Because much student writing has the teacher as the audience, a purpose for this lesson is to write for an audience beyond the classroom or the school. Texts direct student thinking toward writers who are critics of society--and, with this as a springboard, the student may also become an informed critic. The focus here is on problems of the aged.

## II. Objectives

1) To take students into the community to observe conditions of a group of citizens (the aged)
2) To gather first-hand information
3) To alert others to the problem
4) To write a letter discussing some facet of the problem and hopefully to become a part of the solution to the problem
5) To offer opportunities for conferences with the teacher, who will help students see whether their letters are well thought out, clearly represented, and appropriately written

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Use Tennyson's "Ulysses" to launch a "brainstorming" session about the old.
2) Assign the reading of two short stories which speak to the condition of the old: "Ma Parker," by Katherine Mansfield, and "Island," by Shirley Jackson.
3) Arrange for student visits (individual or small group) to a nursing home for the elderly to observe conditions.
4) Encourage further observations of the elderly in one's own neighborhood, at the supermarket, in church, and in one's own family.
5) Ask students to interview one elderly person who is interesting and who defies the stereotype of isolated, confused, lonely, and incapacitated. Encourage the student to tape the interview.
6) Plan class time to hear the tapes.
7) Offer choices for writing assignment:
   a) A letter to your congressman about what bills relating to the elderly are pending or about what is being done for them
   b) A letter to the State Department of Public Health about conditions in the nursing home if they are less than desirable

c) A letter to the editor of the local newspaper in which you discuss your findings.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Read the two short stories assigned by the teacher.
2) Determine which activities you will participate in to obtain information on your subject.
3) Take notes on your findings.
4) Locate the subject for your interview and make an appointment.
5) Present your tape to the class.
6) Decide which writing assignment you will do.
7) Write the letter.
8) Revise and re-write final copy.

V. Evaluation

1) The letter will be evaluated for general merit and for total mechanics.
2) Contributions by students to class discussions and presentations will be considered for evaluation at the end of the grading term.

TOPIC: Writing for Varieties of Audiences

James Schnakenberg
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Grades 10-11

# UNDERSTANDING ALCOHOLISM

## I. Rationale

The problem of alcoholism no longer is exclusive to one age group. A majority of students in high school have been exposed to its resultant evils through the media and other sources. The teacher may use this rich background of experience to develop writing lessons that are both relevant and educational. Through films, role playing, and discussion, the teacher may heighten student awareness of these problems and thus provide them with ideas necessary for composition.

## II. Objectives

1) To heighten awareness of the problems caused by excessive drinking
2) To recognize that alcoholism is a disease
3) To consider safer alternatives for entertainment
4) To practice basic writing skills (sentence and paragraph development, punctuation, diction, spelling)
5) To see revision as necessary to produce quality compositions
6) To practice editorial skills

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) A combination of these prewriting experiences should be used to provide the stimulus for writing:
   1) Free color films addressing the problem of teenage alcoholism. Write to N. C. Department of Human Resources, Division of Health Services, Film Library, Raleigh 27602.
      a) Anything for Kicks - 10 minutes
      b) Domino - 26 minutes
      c) He Lived With Us, Dear - 28 minutes
      d) How Safe Am I - 21 minutes
      e) Kid Brother - 25 minutes
      f) Teaching Teenagers About Alcohol - 16 minutes
   2) Class discussions of personal experiences involving alcoholism
   3) Role playing involving alcoholism
      a) an alcoholic who is too drunk to pay attention to his wife
      b) a student caught drinking in school
      c) the star player who drinks beer before the big game and must now face his teammates after the loss
      d) a driver caught driving under the influence
   4) Collages of pictures and words from magazines advertising liquor

2) After two days of prewriting, allow the students to choose one topic for composition:
   1) Short story where alcoholism causes the downfall of a character who must subsequently struggle to reform
   2) A letter to AA stating problems alcoholism has created in their lives and how AA has helped them. Problems may concern marital life, crime, escapism, or accidents.
   3) An argumentative research paper on pros and cons of liquor by the drink (Allow longer time than on others.)
   4) For not more than three students, a survey and report on alcohol usage in your school (Survey skills must be taught.)
3) After two days of composition divide students who choose the same topic into groups of three. Have two students read the other's rough draft and list on paper at least two strengths and two weaknesses they find in the paper.
4) Allow one day for revision in class and circulate among students to answer any questions.
5) Collect the papers and evaluate strengths and weaknesses on a separate sheet.
6) Compose a booklet of the best compositions and the survey report and distribute in the school or community.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) View the films and write down any information that may be helpful for the class discussion of alcoholism that follows.
2) Role play the character which the teacher assigns you.
3) Prepare a small collage of magazine pictures and words on alcoholism.
4) Select one of the four writing choices given and compose a rough draft.
5) In your assigned group read the other students' rough drafts and list on a separate sheet at least two strengths of their papers and at least two ways the paper could be improved.
6) Collect the other students' comments and use them to rewrite your paper.
7) Hand in on the assigned day the final and rough drafts, the other students' suggestions, and any other work you may have done.

V. Evaluation

One grade will be given on the basis of the percentages below:
1) Quality (ideas, organization, style, sentence structure) - 50% of the grade
2) Mechanics - 25% of the grade
3) Effort observed in class participation and time spent wisely - 25% of the grade

TOPIC: Writing for Varieties of Audiences

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Grades 10-12

# STAGING AN AUDIENCE FOR WRITERS

## I. Rationale

There is no one correct English appropriate for every situation. Without realizing it students are already multi-lingual in oral communications. They change vocabulary, sentence structure, usage, and dialect according to setting and audience. However, they often write with no audience in mind other than the teacher and are unaware of changes that should occur when the need arises to communicate outside of the classroom with varied audiences.

By dividing the class into groups and asking them to act out an explanation for different audiences, they see the need for language changes if they are to communicate effectively. It is then easier to change writing styles to fit the intended reader.

## II. Objectives

1) To develop an awareness of the variety of languages used in oral communication
2) To participate in group dramatics
3) To see dialect as an effective tool for communication with certain audiences
4) To develop skill in composing with a particular audience in mind
5) To increase the number of audiences with whom the student can communicate with confidence
6) To continue the awareness of editing and revision as essential to the composing process

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Prepare a situation teenagers quickly identify with.
   Example: A student drives his/her mother's new car to school. He/she and a group of friends riding after school are involved in an accident as they leave the parking lot. He/she was catching a last look at the majorettes when he/she side-swiped a car belonging to a parent who had come to pick up a student
2) Divide the class into groups of 3-5 depending on class size and give each a card with the situation.
3) Vary the cards by adding a different person to whom the student must explain, with the help of his friends, what happened. Use mother, school principal, patrolman, a friend, the insurance adjustor, etc.
4) Allow five minutes preparation time before each group role-plays the explanation.

5) Arrange furniture so groups have performing space.
6) Allow no more than 3-5 minutes per skit.
7) Applaud each group and help create a light atmosphere that encourages the dramatic flair.
8) Vote on the most realistic skit and discuss its qualities.
9) Ask students to point out language, tone and style changes that occurred as listeners changed.
10) If time allows, try switching audiences.
For example: Use the explanation prepared for the insurance adjustor to talk with friend or use the explanation prepared for the parent to talk with the principal
11) The second day give students several new situations and six possible listeners or allow them to create their own.
12) Tell them to write a response of about 100-150 words to three different persons.
13) Encourage a free exchange of ideas and informal conferences as students search for appropriate language for a particular audience.
14) Circulate and offer advice.
15) The next day divide class into groups of five. They should read and edit papers. The group should help each author select his/her best paper.
16) Have students revise the best rough draft and submit it for evaluation the following day. He/she may agree with peer or make his/her own choice.
17) Tell students they may submit other audience papers within the next two days. The one with the best evaluation will receive credit. Others will be recorded as extra practice.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Participate in role-playing activity.
2) Participate in discussion.
3) Write three audience-oriented responses.
4) Work in small groups to evaluate papers and suggest improvements.
5) Select one paper for revision. Consider your own evaluation of your work as well as comments from peers.
6) Revise rough draft and complete a final draft.

V. Evaluation

Pay little attention to mechanics. Concentrate on how well the students' language, style, and content are directed to the audience he/she chooses. Rate papers as excellent, good or average, realizing that students have difficulty when they try a new approach to writing.

TOPIC: Writing for Varieties of Audiences

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Grades 10-12

# THE MESSAGE IN THE BOTTLE

## I. Rationale

Students can be shown the need for proficiency in the use of standard English through a simple device in which they are asked to write the most important advice they could give another person in a sentence of fifteen to twenty words. The sentence is to be sealed in a bottle which could be set afloat in the nearest moving body of water. Since there is the possibility that the bottle will float away and be found by a person in another region or country, the use of standard English is mandatory because neighborhood dialect, colloquialisms and slang could be misunderstood or translated into a meaning different from that intended by the writer. This exercise is a simple one; yet it almost invariably provides the opportunity to give instruction in subordination, denotation, connotation, mechanics, usage, and conciseness.

## II. Objectives

1) To learn to express significant ideas in writing
2) To learn to write the "edited variety of network and publication English" so that any audience can understand
3) to learn to write concisely

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Show students several examples of the same statement written in 1) the neighborhood dialect, 2) in teenage slang, and in 3) "verbose, bureaucratic" language.
2) Have the students translate the statement into the best "edited variety of network and publication" (standard) English they can produce.
3) Have several students volunteer to put their translations on the board and conduct a class editing session.
4) Introduce the idea of the need to use standard English in the "message in the bottle" activity.
5) Ask students to write a sentence expressing the most important advice they could give another human being in a sentence of fifteen to twenty words.
6) Circulate and help with problems that occur during the writing.
7) Have each student write his/her message on the board when he/she has finished.
8) As students finish have them offer editing advice to each other at the board.
9) Have the class offer suggestions about all the messages.
10) Have each student write his/her message in final form based on the whole class's recommendations and deposit it in the large bottle in the classroom.

11) Evaluate each student's message for conciseness and standard English.
12) The following day have each student draw a message from the bottle and respond to the advice given in a letter to the sender of the message. Students can assume a role as an imaginary finder of the message and tell the sender what happened as a result of following the advice.
13) Have students share the letters they receive with the class for fun and as a way of evaluating for themselves the significance of the message.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Translate the three sentences given you into a statement expressed in the best "edited variety of network and publication" English you can produce.
2) Volunteer, if you like, to put your sentence on the board for class discussion.
3) Write a message for the bottle according to your teacher's directions.
4) Ask for help if you have problems.
5) Put your sentence on the board and get advice from classmates about it.
6) Considering the advice, rewrite the message, and place it in the bottle.
7) Draw a message from the bottle and pretend that you are the person who found it (an imaginary person). As that person, write a letter to the sender telling how you tried to use the advice and what happened when you did.
8) Share the letter you receive in response to your message with the rest of the class and tell whether you still think your advice was worth giving. Tell how you changed your message as a result of the response.

V. Evaluation

Evaluation is covered in items 11 and 12 under Procedure for Teacher.

TOPIC: Writing for Varieties of Audiences

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Grades 9-11

# AN ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

## I. Rationale

Awareness of audience is both most important and perhaps simplest to define when writing persuasively. By asking students to create an ad campaign for a real or imagined product, the teacher forces them to take their audiences into account.

This lesson assumes that the students already have a background in persuasive writing.

## II. Objectives

1) To encourage critical thinking
2) To allow practice in persuasive writing
3) To produce an awareness of audience
4) To utilize skills of editing and revision
5) To practice descriptive writing skills
6) To think creatively

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Collect ads from at least five distinctly different types of magazines and/or newspapers.
2) Review with students the basic elements of persuasive writing, using the ads as examples.
3) Challenge students to identify the sources of your ads.
4) Introduce the idea of an ad campaign for one product or idea, aimed at several different audiences. Use textbooks, actual magazine ads, and the chalkboard to get the idea across. There are several excellent books on the subject, including Van Packard's The Hidden Persuaders and Jerry Della Femina's more lighthearted From Those Wonderful Folks Who Gave you Pearl Harber.
5) Assign students the task of choosing a product, either real or imagined, to advertise in their campaign, and then write a detailed description of that product, including what it looks like, what it does, how it is made, where it is made, its cost, etc.
6) Allow students, either as a class or as individuals, to decide on at least five distinct audiences. These can be readers of specific newspapers or magazines, or people who listen to a specific radio station. Television will not work as well because of its broader audience.

Some factors to consider in selecting audiences:

a) age
b) national origin
c) educational background
d) occupation
e) geographical location
f) hobby

Here is an extensive but not exhaustive list of specific suggestions:

AMERICAN ARTIST
AMERICAN HISTORY ILLUSTRATED
ANTIQUES
ARCHEOLOGY
CAMPING MAGAZINE
CHEMISTRY
CONSUMER REPORTS
DANCE MAGAZINE
ENGLISH JOURNAL
ESQUIRE
FARM JOURNAL
FIELD AND STREAM
FILM QUARTERLY
FLYING
FOREIGN AFFAIRS
GOOD HOUSEKEEPING
HOT ROD
JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
McCALL'S
MAD
MECHANIX ILLUSTRATED
MODERN PHOTOGRAPHY
MODERN BOATING AND SAILING
MOTOR TREND
MS.
NATIONAL ENQUIRER
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC
NEW YORK MAGAZINE
OCEANS
OPERA NEWS
ORGANIC GARDENING AND FARMING
PEOPLE
PLAYS
POETRY
POPULAR MECHANICS
POPULAR PHOTOGRAPHY
PSYCHOLOGY TODAY
RETIREMENT LIVING
SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN
SESAME STREET MAGAZINE
SEVENTEEN
SPORTS ILLUSTRATED
SUPERMAN COMICS

TEEN
TRAVEL
VOGUE
YACHTING
A classical music radio station
A rock music radio station

7) Check the students' audience choices to be sure that they have a good variety.
8) Assign each student the task of mounting an advertising campaign for his/her product, using the five different audiences he/she has chosen.
9) The five ads and/or radio commercials are to be done on separate sheets of paper. On the back of each, the student is to write his name and where the ad is to be placed. Art work and illustration are not only appropriate, but also very desirable.
10) Allow at least one full week for the assignment.
11) On the designated day, collect and display the ads. Allow the students to attempt to identify the audience for each ad.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Review with the teacher the basic elements of persuasive writing.
2) Identify the sources of the ads the teacher has brought in.
3) Choose a product to advertise. It may be a real one or one that you make up.
4) On paper describe that product. Include what it looks like, how it is made, what it does, how much it costs, where it is made, and any other details you can think of.
5) Choose five different audiences for an ad campaign for your product. Name the newspaper, magazine, or radio station that will carry your ads. Check your choices with the teacher.
6) Create your ads for those five different audiences. Pay special attention to how each audience is distinct from all the others.
7) Seek suggestions from your classmates and/or teacher if you need them.
8) Give suggestions to your classmates when you can.
9) Place each ad on a separate piece of paper. Put your name and the name of the magazine, newspaper, or radio station on the black.
10) Hand them in on the day set by the teacher.

V. Evaluation

Base your evaluation on how readily identifiable the intended audiences are. Allow students to contribute to the evaluation process.

TOPIC: Writing for Varieties of Audiences

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Grades 9-12

# A WRITING SITUATION FOR THREE AUDIENCES

## I. Rationale

If teachers can create dramatic situations that capture the imagination and interest of their students, they can successfully guide students into writing activities involving a multiple audience. The following activity involves the student by being both personal and immediate. Almost any situation can be used, either real or hypothetical, so long as the students take the bait.

Writing for different audiences makes the students aware of an essential element of the writer's craft. Just as the word "strike" means something different to a bowler, a baseball player, and a fisherman, what we write means something different to different audiences. The students must come to understand that if they want to achieve their purpose in writing, to get their message across, then they're going to have to consider audience.

## II. Objectives

1) To develop an awareness of audience as an integral part of the writer's craft
2) To learn how to use persuasion and argumentation
3) To learn the correct format for letters to officials and businesspeople
4) To learn how language is used in advertising to get a point across
5) To practice basic writing skills
6) To develop an appreciation for the writer's task of revision and rewriting

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Present the following situation or one similar to it to your students: "You and your friends have discovered that a brand of candy in the local grocery causes severe stomach pains, and you want to do something about it. Your plan is threefold: 1) to advise the parents through a letter in the local newspaper; 2) to put up posters advising other kids in the school of the danger; 3) to write a letter to the candy company asking them to recall the bad candy." Another way of presenting the situation is to involve the students in some creative dramatic activity.

2) Announce that the students are to work in groups of three for composing the letters and the poster. They may divide the work or work together on each part of it.
3) Discuss the situation with the class, suggesting that they might want to jot down some notes during the discussion. Ask them what they might say in their letters and on their poster or whether they would say the same thing and put it into the same form. Discuss the possible reactions of the three different audiences.
4) When discussion seems complete, let the students begin composing, allowing them no more than two class periods to complete their work.
5) Direct the students to let two other groups evaluate their writing on some kind of evaluation sheet.
6) Have then hand in their completed work along with their rough drafts, evaluation sheets, and notes.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Discuss the situation described by the teacher in order to decide what you might say in the letters and on the poster.
2) Decide how your group is going to approach the writing activity and begin writing.
3) Present your first drafts to the class for their reactions. Let two other groups read and evaluate your writing.
4) Discuss the suggested corrections or revisions with your group, rewrite the material and hand in to the teacher along with rough drafts, notes, etc.

V. Evaluation

In this writing activity, one grade is given to the group. No less than 50% of the grade should be based on overall quality; no more than 25% on the group's effort; no more than 25% on mechanics. The rough drafts and notes are handed in to help the teacher assess the students' efforts.

A useful post-writing activity might be to have the students address and send the letters to members of the class designated as newspaper editors or company owners and to select the letters they would print or that would make them withdraw their product from the market.

TOPIC: Writing for Varieties of Audiences

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Grades 10-12

# WHO'S LISTENING?

## I. Rationale

A fun way for students to experience writing for a variety of audiences is to ask them to take a familiar story like "Red Riding Hood," "The Three Bears," "The Little Red Hen," and to rewrite it for several different types of readers. Students not only will keep in mind the interests and the educational level of the reader but also will adapt the dialect to the reader. The result is recognition and practice of dialectical levels in language. Neither does the simplicity of the material preclude using basic writing skills involving paragraph organization, mechanical correctness, unity, coherence, etc.

## II. Objectives

1) To practice writing with a specific reader in mind
2) To become more aware and appreciative of dialectical differences in language
3) To practice basic writing skills
4) To practice good paragraph development

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) To begin, discuss the need for writing with a particular audience in mind. Use examples and let students identify the audience for which the example was intended. Some examples may be chosen from literature, depending on the interests of the class. (One example that students always like is a love note that was accidentally lost or left in a book and retrieved by the teacher. Omit names, of course.)
2) Review dialects (formal, informal, regional, technical, teenage slang, etc.).
3) Ask students to select a simple, familiar story like "Jack and the Bean Stalk," "Cinderella," and "Chicken Little." Each pupil should have a different one. Have them rewrite it for three or more different readers: one of their peers (in their own dialect, of course), a football player, a scientist, a politician, a newscaster (like David Brinkley), a farmer, a banker, a preacher, and a pre-school child.
4) If necessary, review essentials of writing paragraphs, etc.
5) Have papers handed in by the end of the second day because their motivation/interest in this project may dwindle rapidly.
6) Let students enjoy papers by reading them aloud to each other.

7) Divide the class into small groups for editorial sessions in which students help each other with mechanics, etc.
8) Have students revise papers and hand them in for evaluation.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Participate in discussion about writing for a specific audience and about using an appropriate dialect for the audience and the occasion.
2) Choose a story and rewrite it at least three ways, each intended for a different audience.
3) Proofread to see that the story is written correctly.
4) Submit the story to the teacher.
5) Participate in editorial sessions.
6) Revise papers.
7) Hand in the story for a final evaluation.

V. Evaluation

Since the main purpose of this assignment is to practice writing for a definite audience with appropriate diction, etc., for that audience, the grade could be based entirely on the pupil's success in so doing.

A second grade could be given to cover other aspects of the paper for a more traditional evaluation.

TOPIC: A Systematic Approach to Teaching Writing

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Grade 12

# WRITING ABOUT LITERATURE, I

## I. Rationale

Students need to see that writing is a form of entertainment. Songwriters put their words on paper to make a song that pleases themselves as well as others; every television program was written before it could be performed. Magazine articles and stories, while they inform, must be fun to read; people buy newspapers because they enjoy reading the lively prose that tells them what they want to know; TV commercials are written to entertain or they will not sell a product; talk-show hosts and commentators develop carefully composed scripts designed to keep the viewer tuned in to hear what they have to say. Indeed, much writing in the "real world" is done to entertain and to capture readers' attention.

Surprising to most students is the fact that much of the literature now designated as "classic" was first composed purely as entertainment. It has continued to appeal to readers because behind the excitement, drama, and plain fun are other values worth careful study.

The object of this proposed system is to present meaningful writing assignments that will entertain classroom audiences and help the student writers develop or delineate a sense of matters of worth in their own lives by writing down their opinions and lessons they have learned from experience.

The "Great Works" on which these lessons are based will be found in most standard English literature texts and are studied by many college preparatory classes. The lessons will give practice in both creative and expository writing, with emphasis on narrative exposition, descriptive characterization, argument and persuasion and logical reasoning. The students may also write satire, different types of poems, and two or three tales based on actual occurrences, depending on their creative interests. The total system is built into the literature program but takes into account the fact that the most important world to the students is the one in which they are living.

The studies to be considered in this system and the accompanying compositions are these:

| BEOWULF (1 week) | CANTERBURY TALES (3 weeks) | MACBETH (2-5 weeks) |
|---|---|---|
| Anglo-Saxon riddle | Ballad or tale (story-telling) | Exposition: argument using reasons and examples |
| Personal description | Satire using descriptive characterization | |

I. Rationale for Lesson A

Guessing games that tease the mind and tickle the funny bone are universal favorites. Party favorites range from "Twenty Questions" to "Knock Knock" jokes. The best jokes are intellectual, and games that teach make learning fun. Students have more fun making up their own learning games and often compose more sophisticated programs than the teacher thinks possible. Using the Anglo-Saxon riddle form, students develop an ear for alliterative language, a feel for the rhythmic line while finding words to describe a common object in an uncommon way, all the while cleverly feeling their listening audience.

Rationale for Lesson B

Senior high students, in making application for college or employment, are often asked to write a personal description, giving what they consider to be their best characteristics and qualities or aptitudes suitable for a particular course of study or position. Learning to look at oneself objectively and to present oneself in positive written expression to a prospective employer or admissions director is important. By the same token, students need to learn to appraise and compliment their peers in language suitable for introductions or recommendations. The "beasts" of the Anglo-Saxon heroes and the complimentary greetings, were merely forerunners of present day rēsumés and letters of recommendation.

II. Objectives for both A and B

1) To develop an understanding of the role of literature as a mode of entertainment
2) To recognize in Anglo-Saxon literature elements of entertainment
3) To relate Anglo-Saxon literature to modern entertainment media
4) To recognize and understand purpose of heroic elements
5) To use heroic elements in practical application
6) To understand devices of poetic expression
7) To use poetic forms in creative endeavors
8) To develop a good self-image and recognize qualities worthy of admiration in others
9) To prepare a formal résumé of personal characteristics for possible later use
10) To discover the fun of creating entertainment for an audience

III. Procedure for Teacher, Lesson A

1) Describe Anglo-Saxon way of life.
2) Describe Anglo-Saxon mead-hall (see example).
3) Describe function of scop or gleeman.
4) Provide copies of riddles (on mead, anchor, etc.) for class guessing.
5) Point out and explain alliteration using examples from students.
6) Point out caesura and rhythm, using clapping of hands.
7) Propose writing of class riddle, calling for first line on easy topic.
8) Write riddle on chalkboard as students think of lines.

9) Assist in adding alliterative words as necessary.
10) Assist in suggesting necessary details to include as hints.
11) Compliment class on completed riddle.
12) Have student make copy to leave on teacher's desk.
13) Leave riddle on board to confound next class.
14) Suggest, as a teaser, everyone writing own riddle to be used on "Mead-Hall" Day.

IV. Procedure for Students, Lesson A

1) Search library for information on Anglo-Saxons to supplement text and aid in "Mead-Hall" Day.
2) Discover additional riddles to bring to class.
3) Decide on topic for original riddle.
4) List characteristics of topic.
5) Phrase characteristics alliteratively.
6) Set description in Anglo-Saxon lines with caesura.
7) Read to class on "Mead-Hall" Day.

III. Procedure for Teacher, Lesson B

1) Carefully select and bring to class a variety of "Superman," "Batman," "Spiderman," etc. comic books; leave in casual pile at front of room.
2) Open a discussion centering on current TV super hero types; ask if anyone has read the Tarzan books.
3) Lead the class to recognize these as entertainment heroes; recognize exaggerated traits and abilities.
4) Recall folk-heroes of literature such as Paul Bunyan, Pecos Bill, Hercules, Samson; ask if anyone remembers study of Odysseus; retell stories as time permits.
5) Pass comic books around and have students suggest characteristics all these heroes have in common; list on board.
6) Begin reading BEOWULF aloud as entertainment, pausing to note common hero characteristics (obscure origin, great strength, boasting, tests of courage, victory over evil).
7) Have students complete reading themselves, emphasizing enjoyment.
8) Discuss Beowulf's exploits and boasting.
9) Using flashback technique, note Beowulf's qualifications.
10) Note what others say about Beowulf, what he says about himself, what he does to prove himself.
11) Note epithets used to describe heroes; think of suitable present-day epithets for particular individuals.
12) Relate to Beowulf's motives, actions, and social attitudes to present-day situations demanding positive assertive action such as preparation for education, travel, public office, social service, etc.
13) Propose preparation of a personal résumé of 300 words to include student's past activities, present interests, future plans with qualifications for realizing hopes.

14) Propose alternate composition of a recommendation of a friend for an official position on the basis of character, ability, and service; suggest possible epithets.
15) Discuss suitable information to be included; emphasize specificity, purpose, and final audience.
16) Discuss objective (non-opinionated) but positive tone.
17) Discuss organization of information and final format.
18) Show samples of actual letters and résumés on unlined paper.
19) Conclude lesson with in-class writing and consultation, sharing and comparing.
20) Convert classroom into a "mead-hall" for an Anglo-Saxon "meet" where all comers present their credentials or introduce another as a worthy member of the community.
21) Permit visiting "scops" to query the meet with riddles between formal beasts.
22) Receive final copy of all papers.

IV. Procedure for Students, Lesson B

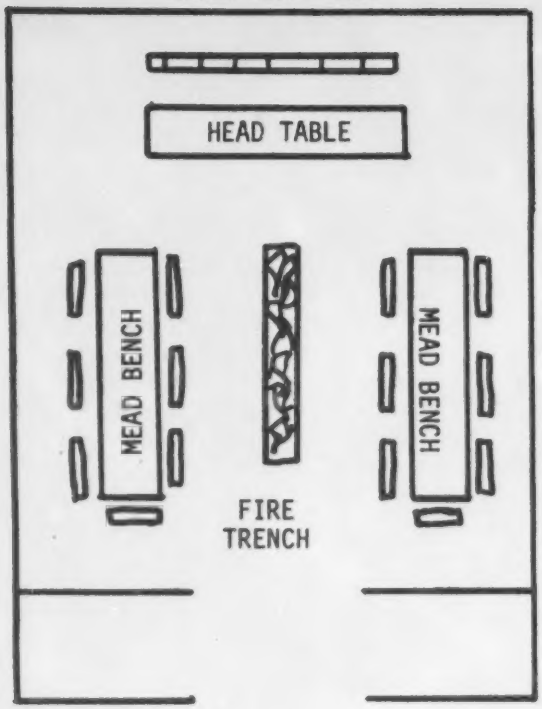
1) Complete reading of BEOWULF, listing hero characteristics, giving examples.
2) Think of situations today that demand courage, "dragons" that need to be slain, people who need a champion.
3) List own personal characteristics pleasing to self and others.
4) List personal interests, hobbies, activities, concerns.
5) List possible future plans that may include community service.
6) For alternate assignment, treat characteristics of a peer.
7) Write unified, coherent paragraphs using details and examples from lists.
8) Re-write on unlined paper, giving attention to spelling and punctuation.
9) Present résumé or recommendation orally to class audience on "Mead-Hall" Day.
10) Present written copy to teacher.
11) Some students may desire to deliver their speeches "beastfully."

V. Evaluation for both A and B

Three grades will be given for these assignments: one, applause and verbal approval of class audience; two, marking of formal paper for organization and mechanics; three, effort grade for creativity in riddle assignment. Grades will be recorded, papers returned, and riddles posted on bulletin board.

EXAMPLE

"MEAD HALL" DAY




A classroom "Mead Hall" can easily be simulated by lining up the desks on three sides of the room and laying a "fire" of sticks and red crepe paper. Inventive students might even "light" the fire with flashlights to give an added effect. Students should bring metal cups from home in which they may be served apple juice for "mead." Leader and thanes may want to make "helmets" of aluminum foil as research into Viking life may suggest. Any other costumes (blankets, capes, thong-wrapped feet and legs) would add to the effect; women wore long skirts.

The leader and his thanes (nobles) sat at the head table; other members of the group sat at the long benches. Food was cooked in the open trench and served on the benches. Mead, a beverage made from fermented honey and water, was poured and drunk from small cups to give a feeling of warmth and well-being. Visitors left their weapons on the porch or in the anterooms.

On Mead Hall Day students should be allowed to dress in their costumes, then take their places. The leader should rise and welcome all, then call upon the scop for entertainment. A riddle or two may be read, then the leader gives the first "boast" telling of his own prowess. He then calls upon his thanes who in turn give their boasts and call upon members of the assembly until everyone has spoken. From time to time "visiting scops" or any member may read a riddle. There should be loud applause after every speaker and enthusiastic response to the riddles. Frequent re-fills of the cups (pour only small amounts) will add to the spirit of the occasion.

TOPIC: A Systematic Approach to Teaching Writing

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Grade 12

# WRITING ABOUT LITERATURE, II

## I. Rationale for Lesson A

A subtle and sophisticated form of humor is satire. Satire is employed to call attention to human weaknesses and faults of society. It is best seen when pointing out the faults of others and rarely recognized when mirroring one's own weaknesses. Because it often uses metaphoric language and allusion, it enables people to laugh without guilt while poking fun at others. Satire draws its sting by connotation, exaggeration, and understatement, and should not be confused with sarcasm which is often designed to hurt its object. Students need to learn that satire is not insult. Recognizing satire as a useful device of honest criticism, as well as learning how to use it to change a situation, requires intelligence and skill. However, "getting the point" is not absolutely necessary to the enjoyment of satiric writing.

## Rationale for Lesson B

The oldest form of entertainment is the story. People will listen to stories when they will not listen to anything else, and the attention and hearts of young and old alike are captured by a good tale well-told. Students learn early that a good story-teller can get away with almost anything. They also need to understand why and how a story works on the mind and the emotions and to what uses story-telling can be put. The ability to create a story from the experiences of life and to tell the story in such a way as to win an audience or teach a lesson gives both pleasure and power. It is an ability that learned young will last a lifetime.

## II. Objectives for both A and B

1) To recognize the power of words to move emotions and change minds
2) To learn to recognize satire
3) To learn when to use satire
4) To learn how to use satire
5) To understand the different forms of stories which Chauser used
6) To recognize the elements of an effective story
7) To discover the underlying meaning of a light-hearted tale
8) To discover that everyday experiences make good stories
9) To learn to use a story to make a point
10) To write something that will amuse and help others think

III. Procedure for Teacher, Lesson A

1) Ask students to bring copies of MAD magazine to class, or buy one and duplicate appropriate pages to pass around.
2) Show comic strips of "Doonesbury," "Vera Valiant," Woody Allen, and others.
3) Show political cartoons.
4) Show "Art of Buchwald" and Russell Baker columns from daily newspaper, or other satiric political columnists available.
5) Begin a bulletin board of contemporary satire for students to add to.
6) Watch for examples of satire in TV series or movies.
7) Show how satire can be used to point out weaknesses and faults in accepted social orders.
8) Help students to determine the weakness satirized, not the entire institution.
9) Point to the faults in the practice of religion, law, commerce, medicine, and education satirized by Chaucer's pilgrims. Show how he uses exaggeration and understatement to make his point. (i.e., the Physician's love of gold because "he used it in cures," and the Monk's harness bells that "rang louder than the chapel bells ")
10) Point to human frailties and vices of vanity, greed, lust, dishonesty satirized by other pilgrims, using metaphor and allusion (i.e., The Miller's "golden thumb" satirizes his dishonesty, while a modern con-artist might have a "silver tongue," and the Franklin who was "Epiourus' son" could be likened to a modern man of hospitality who could be referred to as "Howard Johnson's son.")
11) Show how Chaucer criticizes the fault without damaging the whole person or institution.
12) Propose that students look at various public figures for weaknesses that might be gently satirized (Students may mention the luxuries bought by radio and TV religious personalities; the teacher should be extremely tasteful in dealing with matters of religion--just as Chaucer was).
13) Discuss various professions and institutions that might be satirized for misuse of purpose (schools that do not teach, insurance that does not pay, judges who are not just, etc.).
14) Begin a class-writing of a school problem that could be satirized (lookers, boy-girl relationships, clean-up campaigns, etc.).
15) Write points of satire on chalkboard.
16) Compose sentences using exaggeration, understatement, connotation.
17) Show how situation or trait satirized can be written in terms of metaphor or allusion.
18) Keep students to the main point being satirized.
19) Assign writing of individual satires on topics known to students.
20) Suggest that students use essay form or rhymed couplet if desired.
21) Artistic students may also submit satiric cartoons with appropriate captions for additional credit and class enjoyment.
22) Allow two more days for completion of assignment.(Strike while the iron is hot!)

23) Offer assistance in the writing process to anyone who needs help in expressing his/her idea satirically. (Some students are not as sharp at this as others, and should not be penalized.)

IV. Procedure for Students, Lesson A

1) Bring copies of MAD magazine to school.
2) Read newspapers everyday in search of satire. Clip for bulletin board.
3) Watch TV for satiric programs and commercials; report to class.
4) Make a list of government practices that could be satirized (agencies identified by large initials, income tax forms, overstaffing, etc.).
5) Make a list of social situations that could be satirized (parties, pseudo-friends, status-seeking, etc.).
6) Make a list of school problems that could be satirized.
7) Write a few "two-liners" in rhymed couplet following Chaucer's pattern to introduce your ideas.
8) Select the topic for which you can supply the most details.
9) Write an essay-paragraph describing the person or situation chosen, noting points of weakness or fault that need attention or change.
10) Rephrase faults satirically, using exaggeration, understatement, connotation, metaphor, allusion as seems appropriate. Compose in rhymed couplet if desired.
11) Show to teacher for suggested changes before making final copy.
12) Make final copy, observing rules for mechanics and manuscript form.

V. Evaluation for Lesson A

On day that satires are to be submitted, have students sit in groups and read each other's papers. Each group selects best paper for reading to the class by group spokesman. These papers will all receive an A for entertainment. Any others which the students consider "good" may also be read aloud for an entertainment grade. Class will then vote on the five best to be revised and submitted to the school newspaper for publication. These will receive another A after revision. All other papers will be marked by teacher for two grades: satiric content and mechanics.

III. Procedure for Teacher, Lesson B

1) Explain the technique of "Readers' Theatre." This is a story-telling device which tells the story through several readers: a narrator who reads everything except dialogue, and others who take the various voice or character parts. Everything is read except "He said" and "She said." The various readers assume the appropriate attitudes suggested by adjectives (angrily, merrily, etc.) but are not required to "act."
2) Divide the class into two groups and assign one group to read "The Nun's Priest's Tale" while the second reads "The Pardoner's Tale."

3) Tell each group that they may present their story in any way they like with one rule: they must adhere strictly to Chaucer's words (except for the omissions of "he said" and "she said "). Costumes may be used if desired.
4) Give remainder of period for reading and planning. The first half of the next class may be used for rehearsing. Groups should choose leaders to direct activity.
5) Assist in group planning. With a little prodding, students may come up with "chicken outfits," parade of Chanticleer's wives, a "tree" for Chanticleer to perch in, a "tavern" for the rioters to carouse in, a well-labled "tree" under which a bushel of "gold" may be found; if the students become carried away with pantomiming the drinking and wrestling and stabbing scenes while the narrator reads, the enjoyment of the class will be doubled.
6) Discuss both stories simultaneously, giving attention to elements of setting or situation, characters, point of view, action (plot), climax, tone, theme, and moral.
7) Point out the characteristics of the FABLE (animals behave as people).
8) Point out the characteristics of the EXEMPLUM (characters exemplify vices).
9) Show how Chaucer helps reader identify with situation (familiarity with details).
10) Show how Chaucer helps reader learn from story (points to moral, just in case).
11) Mention Chaucer's use of satire and irony; see if students can recognize and identify satires of social classes, husband-wife relationships, egotism and avarice.
12) Suggest familiar experiences in daily life from which lessons have been learned (waiting too long to make a decision, trying to get away with something and getting caught, pretending to be something which you are not, running away from responsibility, etc.).
13) Propose writing of an experience in the form of a story.
14) Discuss elements of setting, characters, point of view, theme, climax, tone, action, moral.
15) Assign two days or week-end for production of rough draft.
16) Assist in class in rough draft writing, emphasizing movement or action and characterization as motivation for theme.
17) Suggest peer reading and assisting in clarification of ideas.
18) Encourage creativity; enhance "true" experience with imagined details.
19) "Short short" stories, using concise language, should total no more than 500 words.
20) Take up rough drafts and read aloud anonymously with <u>praise</u> a random selection.
21) Comment before the bell that you can hardly wait to read the rest.
22) The next day tell the class that their stories are outstanding; read two more of the best aloud, stopping before the moral to see if the class can state the "lesson" learned by the anonymous writer.

23) Return stories for re-writing; you have marked them only with a comment as to improvement of one of the elements ("Your action is too fast; I get lost." "Your main character needs more description." "Your theme is not clear--what is the point?").
24) Give two days for rewriting take up final drafts.

IV. Procedure for Students, Lesson B

1) Read story assigned to group.
2) Decide with group what part to take in Readers Theatre. If there are not enough reading parts, you may be sound effects or prop manager. Help think of costumes and actions.
3) Make and bring to class whatever the group assigned you for presentation.
4) Take part in presentation as assigned by group.
5) Participate in class discussion; tell what you know; ask questions.
6) Think of and jot down experiences from which you learned a lesson.
7) Try to remember times from your childhood when you were punished for something.
8) Remember times when you (or someone else) did something "wrong" that you (or they) got away with.
9) Remember times when you did something you wished you had not done.
10) Think of advice you could give another person from your own experience.
11) Think of ways you could tell this "story" using characters (lazy, conceited, etc.).
12) Give your experience a "setting" (beach, school, shopping district, etc.).
13) Tell story chronologically or with flashbacks; decide on point of view.
14) Use words to distinguish tone (solemn, cheerful, silly, sad).
15) Give story to classmate to read for suggestions.
16) Decide how you will state the "moral" at the end (narrator or character).
17) Turn in rough draft.
18) Rewrite returned copy giving attention to teacher's comments and mechanics.

V. Evaluation of Lesson B

Stories should be read for entertainment value (Did you and the class enjoy reading it?) and inclusion of elements emphasized in class discussions. Two grades. Best stories should be returned for additional revision of mechanics and, when rewritten, submitted to school literary magazine or other publication. An additional A should be given all stories submitted for publication. Remember that you are judging the student's life over which he/she may or may not have control at this point, so all efforts should be read sympathetically.

Your grade may be an indication to the student of your attitude toward his/her handling of the situation. If you do not approve of a value judgment, you might say so in your comment, but do not lower a grade if the student has fulfilled the other requirements.

TOPIC: A Systematic Approach to Teaching Writing

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WRITING ABOUT LITERATURE, III

I. Rationale

Clear thinking--rational and logical, unclouded by emotion or opinion--comes only to those who take the time to analyze and support hypotheses. Argumentation, based on reasons and examples, is a satisfying form of writing for the careful student and gives confidence to the less secure. Many teachers have difficulty explaining the steps in logical reasoning to their students. This lesson will describe step-by-step the composition of a "formal" expository theme, showing how the elements of composition--unity, coherence, and emphasis--are achieved through an introductory statement and thesis (a proposition or theory to be proved), topic sentences, examples, transitional devices, and finally a conclusion that reinforces and satisfies the opening proposition.

Why should a senior high school student labor over organization and form in such a "formal" paper? First. working within a structure is supportive, as the walls of a house hold and protect the furnishings; second, presenting proof for one's proposition gives authority that builds self-confidence, as a lawyer more often wins a case with evidence, not rhetoric; third, learning a new craft to add to one's skills, and satisfying oneself on a demanding job well-done, results in a sense of pride. Teachers of this demanding skill must assist students at every step so that the product of the endeavor will be successful, thus encouraging the students as they face future assignments in thinking and writing in other courses, also.

The procedures in this lesson may seem oversimplified, stark and rigid, but they are merely tools which will become flexible with use and may be decorated and embellished according to the individual who uses them. Familiarity with the system will enable the writer to create products of infinite variety, but all clearly distinguishable as of superior workmanship!

II. Objectives

1) To understand the "shape" (structure) of a composition
2) To understand the reason for an introductory (lead-in) statement
3) To discover effective ways of beginning a composition
4) To understand the purpose of a thesis sentence
5) To learn how to make a thesis specific
6) To understand the necessity of organization
7) To learn how to build an effective argument
8) To learn how to make sentences "flow"
9) To understand the importance of a conclusion
10) To learn how to end an argument satisfactorily

III. Procedure for Teacher and Students

1) Inform your students at the beginning of the study of MACBETH that they will be permitted to express their opinions throughout this play and that you hope the class will engage in many arguments.
2) Suggest that superstition plays a large role and that you will be interested in knowing how they feel about witches and predicting the future.
3) Suggest that everyone knows what too much power and popularity do to some people; ask for examples of people they know of who lost what they thought they had gained when they became too popular or too powerful.
4) Reflect on the difficulty we all have with temptation, deciding against our consciences, and the guilty feelings we may experience as a result.
5) Encourage free discussion and slip into an introduction to the man Macbeth, who was troubled by all these problems.
6) Suggest that as they read the play and discuss it they choose one of these ideas (write topics on the chalkboard) to think about and later express their own opinions as to how Macbeth dealt with the problem when the class writes a paper on the play:

   Superstitution as an influence in decision-making
   Popularity and power as corrupting influences
   The battle between conscience and temptation

7) Throughout the teaching of the play make constant reference to the topics, showing that this or that line or speech is a good example.
8) Be sure that students are keeping a special section in their notebooks for notes on the topic they have chosen.
9) At the end of each act go over the topics and call for examples from the notebooks for each one.
10) Ask students from time to time which topic they have chosen and what proofs they have found. Ask to see notebooks and make suggestions if studerts seem hesitant.
11) By the time the study of the play has been completed (about 3 weeks) students should have a healthy collection of notes and quotes--jottings--with which to work.
12) To help students organize and arrange their jottings, section off three areas of the chalkboard; after dividing class into groups according to topics, have students consolidate jottings by listing on chalkboard (see example sheet).
13) Lead students in each group to recognize information under three headings; some items may be discarded as irrelevant; students may need additional items to complete a skimpy section--make suggestions by asking leading questions.
14) Ask students in each group what the lists lead them to think about the topic.
15) Ask students if they have an idea that can be proved from the information found.
16) Ask students to frame a sentence stating the idea to be proved; write some of these on the board.

17) Show how each heading should be included in the statement, making it specific; underline specific words indicating main points.
18) Say that this statement is their THESIS which they will prove in their papers; check to see that each student has written a thesis.
19) Comment on the fact that students may have different theses for the same general topic.
20) Put outline form on chalkboard and have students fill in parts from their own notes (see example sheet).
21) Show how various levels on form supply particular information.
22) Show how coherence (linking ideas and details) is achieved through parallelism.
23) Show use of relationship and transitional words in outline.
24) Show how topic sentences and examples come from outline.
25) Show where main points in thesis are found in outline.
26) Assist students in making their outlines parallel for ease in writing paper later.
27) Check each person's outline before allowing the student to proceed with writing.
28) Draw the "shape" of a composition on the chalkboard (see example).
29) Label parts and show students that they now have the "skeleton" of their compositions and need only to "put meat on the bones."
30) Tell students that first they must fill in the "head"--they have the "brains" (thesis) but need a "face"; this is the introduction, the part the readers meet first, from which they get their first impression.
31) Go back to earliest discussion of the play when students identified personally with the three topics; ask them to think and then write quickly their own opinion of superstition, power, and conscience.
32) Have several students read their opinions. Discuss present-day implications.
33) Tell students to think of a startling sentence that might lead in to their statement of opinion; share these and comment favorably on the "looks."
34) Let students expand and develop these opinions up to one-half page.
35) Say that the "face" of their composition needs a "mouth"--a sentence that tells what the paper is about and which leads into the thesis.
36) Help students link thesis coherently with introduction, using title of play, author's name, and literary classification.
37) Direct students now to proceed with paper, using topic sentence to begin each paragraph, transitional words to link details and examples, and a clincher at the end of each paragraph which also leads into the next.
38) Watch students as they continue to work, assisting with transitions; be sure that students follow their outlines; tell students that you are available for help.
39) Show students from diagram that the conclusion is the firm base on which the rest of the paper stands.
40) Discuss what might go into the conclusion: a summary or restatement? ("Does your face look like your feet?").

41) What do feet do? (They hold up the body and take it places.) What should a conclusion do? (Emphasize the thesis and add a special touch that will make the reader "take it with him/her.")
42) Have students work on their conclusions. Suggest using a provocative title that might be repeated or alluded to. Suggest use of a quotation from the play. Walk around and observe students' efforts. Commend everyone who has anything.
43) Fifth day will be finishing day. Complete writing of paper in class. Turn in rough draft at end of period.
44) Continue to assist students as they write in class. As you read, casually correct mechanical errors, explaining problem and reason.
45) If most students finish before the bell, use time to discuss major mechanical errors for students to avoid. Suggest that they exchange papers with peers for proof-reading.
46) Over the week-end, read all papers quickly, marking no errors, but making checks in margin where error occurs on line.
47) Return papers for re-writing. Students find and correct errors at home; say that you are available for conference any day this week. Final copies will be due on Friday. Remind students of manuscript rules.

V. Evaluation

Students receive three grades for this paper: (1) Daily effort and progress, (2) Content and organization, (3) Mechanics. The first grade is for working hard in class instead of wasting time; the second is for their good ideas and the way they put them together; the third will encourage them to rewrite their rough drafts carefully after the teacher has marked the errors. Students should be told about this grading system on the first day of the writing lessons. The teacher's final task should not be difficult; Read quickly and mark as before, making a helpful comment at the end when assigning the grade. Late papers should take a penalty depending on the reason--after all, they've had two weeks on this paper, and plenty of help!

TOPIC: Superstition as an influence in decision-making

JOTTINGS

Act I
Witches give predictions
Macbeth believes witches
Banquo doubts witches
Macbeth writes Lady Macbeth
Lady Macbeth believes
Lady Macbeth decides on murder
Lady Macbeth persuades Macbeth

Act II
Banquo mentions witches
Macbeth sees dagger leading
Macbeth hears voices saying "sleep no more"

Act III
Banquo mentions witches
Macbeth remembers predictions
Macbeth decides to kill Banquo
Macbeth sees ghost
Macbeth decides to go to witches

Act IV
Witches show apparitions
Macbeth believes prophecies
Macbeth decides to kill Lady Macbeth & family

Act V
Lady Macbeth sleepwalks
Macbeth believes he is safe
Macbeth loses confidence
Macbeth fights to the last

ORGANIZATION

I. Prediction of witches
  A. At First Meeting
    1. For Macbeth
      a. Would be Thane of Cawdor
      b. Would be king
    2. For Banquo
      a. Would not be king
      b. Would "get" kings
  B. At Second Meeting
    1. From apparitions
      a. "Beware Macduff"
      b.
      c.
    2. From Show of Kings
      a. Line of kings
      b. All from Banquo

II. Belief of Macbeth
  A. Witches gave him honors
    1. Honors
    2.
  B. Apparitions Promised
    1. Victory
    2.

III. Decisions of Macbeth
  A. To kill Duncan
    1.
    2.
  B. To kill Banquo
    1.
    2.
  C. To become tyrant
    1.
    2.

TOPIC: Popularity and power as corrupting influences

JOTTINGS

Act I
Statement of soldier
Praise of Duncan
Visit of Duncan
Gaining of title
Desire for crown

Act II
Talk with Banquo
Murder of Duncan
Framing of Malcolm
Gaining crown

Act III
Plot against Banquo

Use Macbeth's actions and what people said about him to prove his corruption

ORGANIZATION

I. Evidence of Macbeth's Popularity
  A. Admiration of people
    seen in 1. Statement of soldier
    seen in 2. Statement of Ross
  B. Admiration of king
    1. Giving of title
    2. Visiting castle

II. Increase of Macbeth's Power
  A. From general to thane
    1. Accepted title
    2. Desired crown
  B. From thane to king
    1. Plotted murder
    2. Committed murder

III. Tyranny of Macbeth's Rule
  A.
  B.

TOPIC: The battle between conscience and temptation

JOTTINGS

Act I
"Seemed rapt" at predictions
First thought of murder
Wrote to wife
Face showed feelings
Decided against murder
"Ambition only spur"
Let wife convince him

Act II
Talked with Banquo
Saw dagger
Heard voices
Felt immediate regret
Bewailed murder

Act III
Jealous of Banquo
Hired murderers
Saw ghost
Denied murder

(Use Macbeth's own words to prove that he lost the battle)

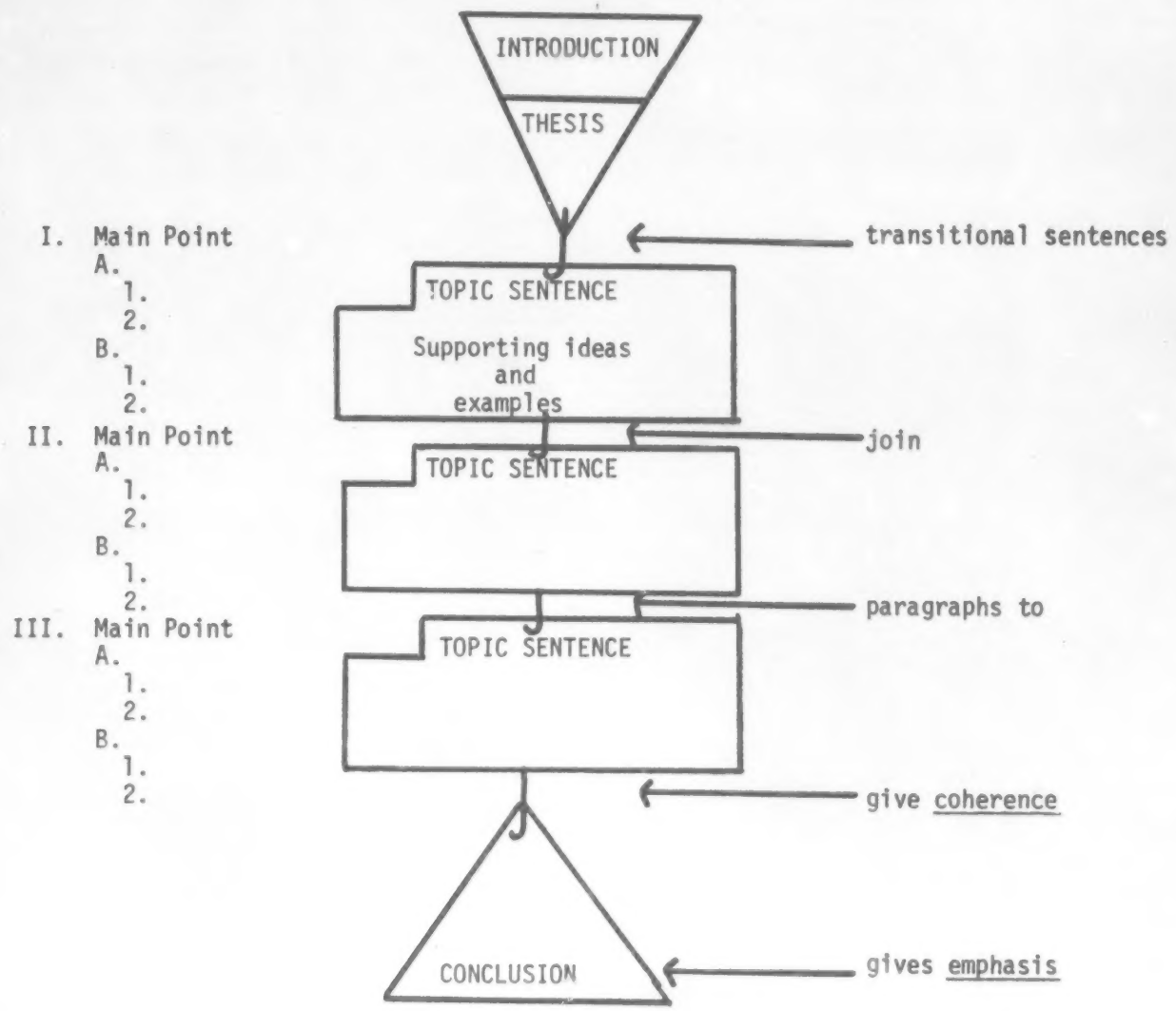
ORGANIZATION

I. Macbeth's desire
  A. For power
    1. "If this be ill. . .
    2.
  B. For security
    1. "My fears stick deep . . .
    2.

II. Macbeth's doubt
  A. Of need
    1. "I have no spun. . .
    2.
  B. Of method
    1. "We will proceed no further. . .
    2. "Is this a dagger. . .

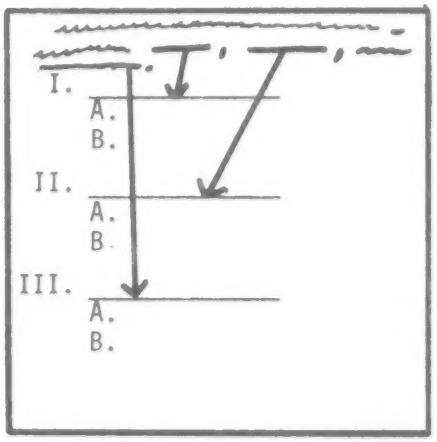
III. Macbeth's regret
  A. Of murders
    1. "Wake Duncan. . .
    2. "From this hour. . .
  B. Of overspent life
    1. "My way of life. . .
    2. "Tomorrow. . .

THE "SHAPE" OF A COMPOSITION
(Can be made as a mobile and hung up)




The THESIS sentence points directly to the main ideas to be developed in the body of the paper. It states specifically what the paper intends to prove. Students should be able to draw lines from specific words in their theses to the main points in their outlines.

The thesis controls the unity of the composition.



TOPIC: A Systematic Approach to Teaching Writing, I

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Grades 7-8

# WRITE ON . . . AND ON!

## I. Rationale

No matter how creatively writing assignments are conceived and presented by the teacher, students very often feel frustrated about attempting them because they lack basic skills. Once students can feel comfortable and free about their ability to approach demanding assignments, they can concentrate on the sophisticated aspects of writing and abstract thought.

This system first establishes an essential trust between teacher and students. Students learn that the teacher respects their "cultures" and sincerely wishes to acquaint them with further tools that will offer them greater social mobility. These tools are mastered through a very structured series of activities, including discussions, writing assignments, lessons on procedure and mechanics, group sharing, and evaluation, resulting in the students' feeling that they have a sound base for writing.

## II. Objectives

1) To develop a feeling of confidence and well-being about writing
2) To establish a feeling of trust between teacher and students
3) To establish a feeling of trust and respect for ideas and feelings of others
4) To learn the steps involved in producting a well-developed sentence, paragraph, theme, research paper and/or thesis
5) To appreciate the value of organizing thoughts and material
6) To appreciate the value of revision
7) To master problems in mechanics which occur on an individual basis (punctuation, spelling, agreement, etc.)
8) To master problems in mechanics and technique which occur among the class as a whole (topic sentence, outlining, sentence combining, sentence variety)
9) To develop skills and techniques needed to work within a group
10) To accept individual responsibility for completing tasks
11) To appreciate the value of role playing as a way of seeing another point of view
12) To develop skills for productive class discussion
13) To develop an understanding for the necessity and relative importance of formal, standard and colloquial dialects as they occur in writing, speaking, and reading
14) To develop an understanding for the necessity of choosing a subject that is relevant, familiar, and interesting

III. Procedure for Teacher

Each of the following steps will be presented in detail separately. No specific time for assignments has been suggested as this will depend on the level of the groups and the rate at which they are able to grasp the material.

1) Introduction to establish rapport
2) Diagnostic theme
3) Procedure for writing outlines and thesis statements exemplified in a writing assignment
4) Techniques for mastering principles of sentence variety, sentence combining, and transition with application in a writing assignment

IV. Procedure for Students

Each of the following activities will be presented in detail separately as they occur:

1) Discuss with the class uses of formal, standard, and colloquial dialects. Role play to illustrate usefulness and relevance in a variety of situations.
2) Write a diagnostic theme.
3) Learn techniques and application of selecting a topic, outlining and writing a thesis statement.
4) Learn techniques and application of sentence variety, sentence combining, and transition.

V. Evaluation

Students will keep all writing assignments in a folder. Each assignment except the first diagnostic theme will be evaluated and revised through constant student-teacher conference, particularly at strategic check points, and by group evaluation. At the end of the assignment the teacher and individual students will arrive at a grade based on relative progress and mastery of techniques involved.

TOPIC: A Systematic Approach to Teaching Writing, II

Dianne S. Avery

# INTRODUCTION: RAPPORT BUILDING

## I. Rationale

This step is necessary to develop a feeling of trust and understanding between teacher and students. It helps to dispel the idea that teachers believe that only formal and standard English are correct and should be used at all times. A class discussion and role playing activity illustrate the acceptance and relevance of many dialects. If the students accept the premise that the teacher will accept their dialects, they can then trust the teacher with their ideas and feelings, and hopefully they can accept the idea that it is possible and perhaps necessary to learn other dialects.

## II. Objectives

1) To develop rapport and acceptance between teacher/students and student/student
2) To develop the idea that all dialects are correct when used in relevant context
3) To recognize the need for command of many dialects if one is to have social and economic mobility
4) To develop the techniques of class interaction
5) To learn and practice role playing

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Initiate class discussion of dialects (I have begun the class by writing on the board the sentence, "I ain't got no pencil." I ask for reactions, which are always negative, and record them on the board. They think I want them to say that this is always a wrong thing to say. From there we move to a discussion of formal, standard and colloquial dialects. The football player in the class will readily agree that during practice he would never say, "Would you kindly pass me the football please, Jim.")
2) Lead students through discussion to accept that many dialects are needed.
3) Initiate a role playing activity which demonstrates uses of many dialects.
4) Help students to draw conclusions based on the discussion and a role playing exercise.

## IV. Procedure for Students

1) Discuss necessity and relevance of formal, standard and colloquial dialects.
2) Participate in and draw conclusions from a role playing activity using a variety of dialects.

(The activity which I have found valuable is one in which students take the following roles: a teacher, the teacher's friend, two students who cause a class disturbance, their friend, the principal, parents of the disruptive students. The situation is that the students cause a disturbance, are sent from the room to the principal. On the way to the office they meet their friend and give an account of the incident. They also report what happened to the principal and their parents. The teacher then reports the incident to her teacher friend and the principal. All except the friends meet in the principal's office the next morning for a conference.)

V. Evaluation

No formal grade would be given in this assignment, but the teacher should carefully evaluate the results of discussion and role playing for potential needs for improvement for future use.

TOPIC: A Systematic Approach to Teaching Writing, III

Dianne S. Avery

# DIAGNOSTIC THEME

## I. Rationale

At this point the teacher needs to evaluate the needs of the individual students and the group as a whole. This can be accomplished by assigning a diagnostic theme of a specific nature.

## II. Objectives

1) To diagnose what problems students are having as individual writers
2) To diagnose what writing problems students are having as a whole

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Mimeograph some blank checks and write each student a check for $1,000,000 (be sure to write void in an inconspicuous place on check).
2) Assign students the task of writing first an outline and then a paper about their first day as a millionaire. (If students cannot outline, tell them to make a list in time sequence of what they would do before writing the paper.)
3) Initial all outlines or lists before students begin a rough draft.
4) Observe students while they are writing the assignment in class so that it is a true representation of each student's work.
5) Assign students a folder for the finished product.
6) Evaluate the papers noting individual and group needs.

## IV. Procedure for Students

1) Write an outline or list of what you would do on your first day as a millionaire.
2) Write a theme including a rough draft and ink copy following the outline or list.

## V. Evlauation

Students will understand from the beginning of this assignment that this is for diagnostic purposes only, and they will not be graded. However, extensive evaluation of this assignment must be done by the teacher to ascertain class and individual needs. The teacher must decide at this point which students are already proficient in the skills to be stressed in the next two assignments. If there are such students (I have not found any yet), they should immediately be assigned more advanced independent study projects.

TOPIC: A Systematic Approach to Teaching Writing, IV

Dianne S. Avery

# OUTLINING AND THESIS STATEMENT

## I. Rationale

Most students in the class, if not all, will now begin to question the fact that they were unable to produce an outline and in discussion will express certain frustrations about completing the previous assignment to their satisfaction. This leads naturally into the need for a general discussion of organizing (outlining) and having a definite predetermined plan for a theme. Once these techniques are explained, they need to be successfully put into practice by the students in another appropriate writing assignment.

## II. Objectives

1) To master the mechanics of topic and sentence outlining
2) To learn to recognize and write a good topic (thesis) sentence
3) To learn the steps necessary to produce an organized, coherent theme
4) To appreciate the value of revision
5) To have the satisfaction of producing a theme which follows an orderly process

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Discuss the observations which were an outgrowth of the previous paper in an effort to help students see the need for process
2) Teach students to write correct topic and sentence outlines. Plan to spend the time that is necessary to make certain that students master parallelism in the topic outline since success in organization will be decreased if order is not maintained.
3) Help students to understand and produce thesis (topic) sentences.
4) Present and explain the six steps necessary for producing a writing assignment of this nature. Be sure to point out that these steps can be used for a paragraph, theme of varying lengths, a research paper, or a thesis if necessary. The papers just get longer!
5) Assign a writing project in which students can successfully complete these steps.
6) Provide the atmosphere and time for students to complete this assignment in class.
7) Constantly be available to students for checking and initiating outline, checking rough drafts, and answering questions. It is important to make certain that students do not begin the rough draft before completing a correct outline.

8) Begin working with students on individual problems as they write.
9) Read and evaluate the final drafts.
10) Divide the students into groups of five and have them select and read to the class the paper from their group which best follows the process.
11) Have students place all papers in individual folders.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Take careful notes on the techniques of topic and sentence outlining.
2) Complete assignments which reinforce various aspects of correct outlining.
3) Enter the definition of a topic sentence in notebooks:
   a) Must be an attitude or opinion. Is not a fact
   b) Must contain a key word or words.
   c) Requires proof or illustration.
4) Write some practice topic sentences circling the key words. List some proofs or illustrations to support topic sentences.
5) Write in notebook the following six steps for writing a theme (etc.):
   A. Select a subject which is interesting to you, jotting down or taking notes on everything that you know or can find out about this subject. (For a research paper take notes on 3 x 5 index cards.)
   B. Analyze your notes and decide on an approach to the subject. Write a thesis (topic) sentence which expresses this approach.
   C. Select the information which supports your thesis and outline it in a correct topic outline as follows:

Title

I. Topic sentence (write thesis sentence within this parenthesis)
II. Reasons
   A.
   B. (These reasons should be parallel and can vary
   C. in number, but a good number seems to be 4-5
   D. good ones. The reasons are the proofs which
   E. support topic sentence.)
III. Conclusion (write a concluding sentence within this space)

This outline can be expanded for a longer theme or term paper. I. becomes the introduction and statement of purpose. II. is expanded with added detail and becomes section which supports the thesis idea. III. contains the concluding statements.

   D. From the outline write the rough draft. Make it rough; revise constantly. It is best to leave the finished rough draft for awhile and then revise again in order to catch errors in expressing ideas clearly and correctly.
   E. Write an ink copy
   F. Read the ink copy (preferably after time has passed), checking for careless errors in punctuation, capitalization, spelling, etc.

6) Practice the above steps in a writing assignment. Do step one by selecting a student in the class. Have the student come to the front of the room for a class period. Ask questions of this student and make notes on observations. Follow the rest of the steps, but this time limit the paper to one paragraph.
7) After the papers are complete, get into groups of five and select the paper which best follows the procedure. Read the best paper to the class.
8) Place papers in individual folders.

V. Evaluation

The teacher will have carefully checked these papers through each step of the process helping with individual problems. Even though the teacher reads the papers at this point, it is important not to assign a grade.

TOPIC: A Systematic Approach to Teaching Writing, V

Dianne S. Avery

# SENTENCE VARIETY, SENTENCE COMBINING, TRANSITION

## I. Rationale

As the students point out good points in the papers they have written in the previous assignments, the teacher can now tactfully ask if there were general observations without focusing on a specific paper that could make the papers better. It is quire natural for inexperienced writers to begin sentences with the subject first, to use simple and compound sentences, and to use little transition, particularly when they have written a paper about a person. Most sentences will have begun with he/she. Through a class discussion these ideas can surface and be explored as a future need to enhance the process. After these skills have been taught, students should practice them in a writing assignment. A theme on how to do something lends itself well for practice in using transition, sentence variety, and sentence combining.

## II. Objectives

1) To develop a more sophisticated paper by implementing the techniques of sentence variety and sentence combining
2) To distinguish between written and spoken English
3) To apply effectively the use of transitional devices
4) To practice skills in a writing assignment
5) To begin to master individual problems in basic mechanics
6) To appreciate the results of revision and polishing
7) To read critically, looking for elements of good writing
8) To participate effectively and positively in a group
9) To participate cooperatively in class demonstrations
10) To become aware of the necessity for making directions explicit

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Lead students to critically evaluate what they are writing.
2) Present practical lessons and practice on techniques of sentence variety and sentence combining. (I have found that this can be effectively accomplished by beginning with a discussion of the differences between written and spoken English. The natural spoken pattern is subject first, not second, complement, etc.--or not a complete sentence at all. Spoken English is usually not boring, however, because we use voice inflection for variety. Since this does not happen on a written page, students must use sentence variety, complex sentences, and transition. This point is well illustrated in class when you ask students if they underline words in letters and notes to each other to gain emphasis.)

3) Provide class instruction and practice assignments in the use of transitional devices. Present several methods in order to avoid students over-correcting and constantly using a transitional word at the beginning of each sentence.
4) Assign students the task of writing a paper on how to do something, following the six writing steps with particular emphasis on variety, sentence combining, and transition. When making the assignment, the teacher can suggest that students can demonstrate some of their papers in class. A fun thing to do is to have boys put on eye make up following the directions and only the directions given by a girl who is reading them from her paper. In this light atmosphere the teacher can point out the need for coherence. Time will not permit reading all papers.
5) Read and initial all outlines and papers as they progress through each step.
6) Help students with individual problems as they write. (If you go to their desks, they will not be lined up talking as they wait at yours, and some students will not actively seek help at the teacher's desk.)
7) Divide the students into groups of five and have them plan a presentation for the class which contains good examples of sentence variety, sentence combining and transition from the papers of members in the group. Have them write them on transparencies, if available, or ditto masters.
8) Have students place their papers in their folders.
9) Return folders to individual students and have them write on a separate piece of paper an evaluation of the progress they feel they have made.
10) Read and evaluate the assignment.

IV. Procedure for Students

1) Take careful notes and complete practice assignments on techniques for accomplishing sentence variety and sentence combining.
2) Take careful notes and complete practice assignments on techniques for using effective transition.
3) Write a theme in class following the six steps on how to do something with which you are familiar, making a particular effort to achieve sentence variety, combine sentences effectively, and use transitional devices when necessary.
4) Pick a student in the class and have this person demonstrate what you have explained in your paper. Bring to class any materials that you will need if you plan to participate in this activity.
5) Participate in a group which will plan a presentation for the class. It will be the task of the group to find good examples of sentence variety, sentence combining, and transition which appear in the papers of your group. Write the examples on a transparency or ditto master.

6) Place your papers in your folders.
7) On a separate sheet of paper write an evaluation of the progress you believe you have made since writing the diagnostic theme. Place this with your paper in your folder.

V. Evaluation

In the "best of all possible worlds" the students and teacher would have individual conferences, discuss the students' self evaluations, as well as the teacher's suggestions for future progress, and mutually agree on a grade. If this is not possible, the teacher should consider the self-evaluation, write comments on the evaluation sheets only, and arrive at a letter grade for the project based on individual possibility of progress and input.

TOPIC: A Systematic Approach to Teaching Writing

Judy Walls
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Grade 4

# WRITING CENTER
# DESCRIPTION OF A SYSTEM

## I. Rationale

A writing center with various open-ended activities will enable a child to make choices of the kinds of writing activities he wants and needs to do. Each child will find something to stimulate his writing interest by using a variety of materials. The writing center can last the entire year by renewing or changing the materials every few weeks or as often as needed. To spark a successful creative writing program, begin by giving children a potpourri of exercises that they can easily attack. This will enable the child to feel quickly a sense of success.

## II. Objectives

1) To develop a desire to explore many materials used in the writing center
2) To use different media for self expression
3) To develop an interest and desire to write by using different kinds of materials
4) To develop powers of observation
5) To learn to make choices
6) To learn to interact with other students while working in the center

## III. Procedure for Teacher

1) Set aside a corner of the room with a bulletin board to display the writing center. It can be as large or as small as space permits.
2) Make the center comfortable with a table, chairs, pillows, bookcase, and carpet. You can use any or all of these items.
3) Collect materials for the center such as pencils, paper, a bulletin board covered with clear contact paper, Bic felt tipped pens, reference books, magazines, newspapers, typewriter, tape recorder, viewer, telephone directories, pictures, cartoons, task cards, index cards, blank books, comic strips, story starters, objects of art, file folders, a T.V.
4) A fun way to start is by covering a bulletin board with clear contact paper and supplying Bic felt tip pens. They will wipe clean with a damp cloth.
5) Be sure to limit the number of students using the center to about 4-6 at one time.

6) Explain to students that they can write anything they want to on the bulletin board.
7) Example: Maybe something happened on the bus coming to school. Maybe something special is happening at school that day. They can express their feelings about the happening.
Example: write graffiti, poems, etc.
8) Suggest that they sign their names to their writing.
9) This bulletin board can remain up all year and a variety of writing plus art projects can be used.
10) A simple uninhibiting activity is extending a story starter:
Example: A manilla folder with a picture of Snoopy on the outside. Inside it says "If you were talking to Snoopy on the telephone, what would you say?"
Example: A manilla folder with a picture of a woman looking horror struck, Inside: "Oh, no, its a . . ."and explain them.
11) Teacher should conduct an oral discussion about the story starters before students write
12) Have them put their papers in a folder or box for checking
13) To encourage observation and writing, cut pictures from newspapers and magazines. Ask them to write one or two line captions to describe what is happening in the picture.
14) Another simple activity for beginning writers involves using cartoons to inspire writing:
Example: Cut out a one-frame cartoon and have students write a caption or punch line. This leads to drawing a cartoon and writing a caption.
15) Comic strips usage:
Example: Cut a comic strip from the Sunday paper and either cut or mark out the balloon. Have students study the comic strip then write his/her own balloons.
16) When possible use a typewriter in the writing center.
Examples: Student types his/her rough draft of a story on the typewriter. Student writes a story and rewrites it by typing it. Some students seem to think clearer when using a typewriter.
17) Tape recorders are an asset to writing centers.
Example: A student can record the story he/she has written and other students can listen to it. If possible let each student have his/her own cassette on which to record.
18) Viewers can be used for pre-writing experiences.
Example: Student looks at film strips about animals, then writes a story about it.
19) Task cards offer varied writing experiences.
Example: Cover task card with clear contact paper after you've written the task on it. This preserves the life of the card. One card might suggest that the student write a report about Abraham Lincoln. This is also an opportunity to use the research books in the writing center. There might be several things listed on the card for the student to find out, such as Which president was he; why was he important; how did he die?

20) Writing books can provide motivation for writing. Clip notebook pages together. The cover can be of construction paper.
   a) Example: Keep a diary for one week of the happenings in the classroom. Date your pages. (This can also be a task card.)
   b) Example: Pick a subject with which you are familiar and write a story about it on your own notebook paper. Have the teacher correct it. Copy it in your best handwriting (you may want to print it like a book) and illustrate it
21) Objects of art provide pre-writing experiences
   Example: Have a glass figurine of an animal or a person. Have the student write a story about it.
   Example: Have pictures by famous artists displayed. The student can describe his/her feelings about the picture.
22) T.V. programs are available for teaching creative writing.
   Example: Watch the creative writing program "Zebra Wings." Be sure to obtain the teacher's guide that goes with it for follow through on the writing assignments.

## IV. Procedure for Students

1) Look over all the materials in the writing center.
2) Decide which one you will have the most fun doing.
3) Carefully read the directions for the activity.
4) If you don't understand what to do, be sure to ask the teacher.
5) After reading the directions, complete the activity.
6) Consult with the teacher to see if you need to revise or rewrite.
7) Rewrite if necessary.
8) Put your finished product in a folder or box that is specifically for that activity.

## V. Evaluation

At the beginning of the year the evaluation can be positive teacher comments: good or very good. An especially good paper can be displayed on the wall. As the year progresses, the children can pick the papers they want graded.

Rewriting should always be part of the writing process. One way to make it less painful is to allow the children to evaluate each others' papers and make suggestions for revision and correction.

The teacher could find a way to publish the best work of the year. One possibility is to compile a booklet by writing them on ditto sheets and making copies. Cardboard covered with contact paper can be used for the cover. Be sure to include a fly leaf and table of contents with story title and author's name.

The writing center can be considered a success if children use it, enjoy it, develop their own writing, and increase their writing abilities.